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THE GARNET STORY BOOK

Tales of Cheer Both Old and New

COMPILED AND EDITED BY

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INTRODUCTION

About the middle of the last century there was printed in England a children's story with the attractive title, "The Good Natured Bear." This story, written by Robert H. Horne, was reviewed by William Makepeace Thackeray, who at that time signed his criticisms M. A. Titmarsh. Mr. Thackeray wrote an article entitled "On Some Illustrated Children's Books" for *Fraser's Magazine* in which he made the following comment: "Let a word be said in conclusion about the admirable story of "The Good Natured Bear," one of the wittiest, pleasantest, and kindest of books that I have read for many a long day."

A few years ago the editors of this collection of stories found out-of-print copies of "The Good Natured Bear," "The Man of Snow," and "Finikin and His Golden Pippins"—all old-fashioned tales for children.

Believing that young readers of to-day will enjoy the good cheer and merry humour of these stories, the editors have included them in this volume with other happy tales which are perhaps much better known.

The excellent humourous stories in the folk-lore of all nations point out to us that good cheer and merriment were favourite themes of the olden-time story-teller. Some of his rarest treasures were nonsense rhymes, fables, and allegories which enlisted the sympathy of his audience by inducing them to laugh with him. With a merry twinkle in his eye we can hear him addressing the tiniest listeners:

"Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed to see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon."

Wide-eyed children pressing close to the enchanter were not the only persons in that appreciative audience who smiled at the first picture suggested by the rhyme, laughed with the little dog, and enjoyed with wholesome

abandon the merriment called forth by the incongruous surprise of the last line. The story-teller knew the refreshing value of hearty laughter at pure nonsense.

The stories in this collection were written by authors who had the precious gift of knowing how to entertain young readers with narratives of good cheer and happy frolic. Such stories are valuable because they keep alive and develop a wholesome sense of humour. It is perfectly natural for a normal child to laugh heartily at the grotesque antics of a circus clown. But this elemental response to merry fun should be trained and quickened into a rich and varied sense of humour which can laugh with Gareth when Lancelot unhorses him; revel with Puck in Fairyland; and enjoy a merry Christmas with the Cratchits.

THE GARNET STORY BOOK

Oh, for a nook and a story book,
With tales both new and old;
For a jolly good book whereon to look
Is better to me than gold!

OLD ENGLISH SONG.

THE GOOD-NATURED BEAR

RICHARD H. HORNE

The First Evening

ONE Christmas evening a number of merry children were invited to a party at Dr. Littlepump's country residence. The neat white house with blue shutters stood on the best street of the village. Nancy and her younger brother, little Valentine, were the children of Dr. Littlepump, and they had invited several other children to come and spend Christmas evening with them. Very happy they all were. They danced to the music of a flute and fiddle; they ran about and sang and squeaked and hopped upon one leg and crept

upon all fours and jumped over small cushions and stools. Then they sat down in a circle round the stove and laughed at the fire.

Besides Dr. and Mrs. Littlepump and the children there were several others in the room who joined in the merriment. First there was Margaret who was seated in the middle of the group of children. She was the pretty governess of Nancy and little Valentine and one of the nicest girls in the village. Then there were Lydia, the housemaid, Dorothea, the cook, Wallis, the gardener, and Uncle Abraham, the younger brother of Dr. Littlepump.

Uncle Abraham was always doing kind things in his quiet way, and everybody was very fond of him. He sat in one corner of the room, with his elbow resting upon a little round table, smoking a large Dutch pipe, and very busy with his own thoughts. Now and then his eyes gave a twinkle, as if he was pleased with something in his mind.

The children now all asked Margaret to sing a pretty song, which she did at once with her sweet voice; but the words were very odd. This was the song:

"There came a rough-faced Stranger
From the leafless winter woods,
And he told of many a danger
From the snow-storms and black floods.

"On his back he bore the glory
Of his brothers, who were left
In a secret rocky cleft—
Now guess his name, and story!"

"But who was the rough-faced Stranger?" asked Nancy.

"And what was the glory he carried pick-a-back?" cried little Valentine.

"Who were his brothers?"

"Where was the rocky cleft?" cried three or four of the children.

"Oh," said Margaret, "you must guess!"

So all the children began guessing at this song-riddle; but they could make nothing of it.

"Do tell us the answer to the riddle Margaret," they coaxed.

At last Margaret said, "Well, I promise to tell you all about the rough-faced Stranger in

half an hour, if nothing happens to make you forget to ask me!"

"Oh! we shall not forget to ask," said Nancy.

There was now a silence for a few minutes as if the children were all thinking. Uncle Abraham, who sometimes went to bed very early, slowly rose from his chair, lighted his candle, carefully snuffed it (and, as he did so, his eyes gave a twinkle), and walking round the outside of all the circle, wished them good-night, and away he went to bed.

About eight o'clock in the evening, when the snow lay deep upon the ground, a very stout gentleman in a very rough coat and fur boots got down from the outside of a carriage which had stopped in front of Dr. Littlepump's door. In a trice all the children crowded around the windows to look at the carriage and the gentleman who had got down.

Besides his very rough coat and fur boots, the stout gentleman wore a short cloak, a hunting cap, and a pair of large fur gloves. The cap was pulled down almost over his eyes, so that his face could not be seen, and round his

throat he had an immense orange-coloured comforter.

The carriage now drove on, and left the stout gentleman standing in the middle of the street. He first shook the snow from his cloak. After this he began to stamp with his feet to warm them. This movement looked like a clumsy dance in a little circle and all the children laughed. The next thing he did was to give himself a good rubbing on the breast and he hit it so awkwardly that it looked like a great clumsy paw on some creature giving itself a scratch. At this the children laughed louder than before. They were almost afraid he would hear it through the windows. The stout gentleman next drew forth an immense pocket handkerchief and with this he began to dust his face, to knock off the frost, and also to warm his nose, which seemed to be very large and long and to require great attention. When the children saw the gentleman do this they could keep quiet no longer; all burst out into a loud shout of laughter.

The stout gentleman instantly stopped, and began to look around him in all directions, to

see where the laughing came from. The children suddenly became quiet. The stout gentleman turned round and round, looking up and down at the windows of every house near him. At last his eyes rested on the three parlour windows of Dr. Littlepump's house, which were crowded with faces. No sooner had he done this than he walked towards the house with a long stride and an angry air.

In an instant all the children ran away from the windows crying out, "Here he comes! Here he comes!"

Presently a scraping was heard upon the steps of the door, then a loud knock! The children all ran to their seats and sat quite silent, looking at one another. There was a loud ringing of the bell.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Littlepump, "that the stout gentleman is so much offended."

"I don't know very well what to say to him," said Dr. Littlepump.

Again came the ringing of the bell!

Not one of them liked to go to open the door.

Margaret rose to go and little Val cried

out, "Oh, don't you go, Margaret, dearest; let Wallis go." But when Margaret promised to run away as soon as she had opened the door, she was allowed to go. Both Nancy and Valentine called after her, "Be sure to run back to us as fast as ever you can."

The children sat listening with all their ears. Presently they did hear something. It was the snap of the lock, the creaking of the door, and a scrambling noise. Margaret came running back into the room quite out of breath, crying out, "Oh, such a nose! Such a dirty face! Don't ask me anything!"

There was no time for any questions. A slow, heavy footstep was heard in the hall, then in the passage, then the parlour door opened wide and in walked the stout gentleman with the rough coat! He had, indeed, an immense nose,—both long and broad and as dark as the shadow of a hill. He stepped only a pace or two into the room and then stood still, looking at Dr. Littlepump, who was the only other person who ventured to stand up.

"I believe I have the honour," said the stout gentleman, making a low bow, "I believe I

have the honour of addressing Dr. Little-pump."

The doctor bowed but said nothing.

The stout gentleman continued, "If I had not known it was impossible that anyone so learned as Dr. Littlepump could allow anybody to be insulted from the windows of his house, I should have felt very angry on the present occasion. It may have made merriment for our young friends here; but it is a serious thing to me."

"Sir," said Dr. Littlepump, "it grieves me that your feelings should have been hurt by the laughter of these children. But, sir, I can assure you no harm was meant by it. This is holiday time, and, though you appear to be a foreign gentleman, yet you are no doubt also a gentleman who has seen much of the world, and of society."

"No, sir; no, Mr. Doctor!" exclaimed the stout gentleman, "I have not seen much of society. It is true, too true, that I am a foreigner, in some respects, but from society the misfortune of my birth has excluded me."

"Oh, pray, sir, do not concern yourself any

further on this matter," said Mrs. Littlepump, in a courteous voice.

"Madam," said the stout gentleman, "you are too kind. It is such very amiable persons as yourself, that reconcile me to my species—I mean, to the human species. What have I said? Not of my species would I willingly speak. But in truth, madam, it is my own knowledge of what I am, under my coat, that makes me always fear my secret has been discovered. I thought the children with their little, quick eyes, always looking about, had seen who it was that lived under this rough coat I wear."

So saying the stout gentleman put one of his fur gloves to his left eye and wiped away a large tear.

"Then, my dear sir," said Mrs. Littlepump, "do take off your coat, and permit us to have the pleasure of seeing you take a seat among us round the stove."

"Oh, ye green woods, dark nights, and rocky caves hidden with hanging weeds, why do I so well remember ye!" exclaimed the stout gentleman, clasping his fur gloves together.

"I will relieve my mind and tell you all. My rough coat, the companion of my childhood, and which has grown with my growth, I cannot lay aside. It grows to my skin, madam. My fur gloves are nature's gift. They were bought at no shop, Mrs. Littlepump. My fur boots are as much a part of me as my beard. Lady, I am, indeed, a foreigner, as to society; I was born in no city, town, or village, but in a cave full of dry leaves and soft twigs. The truth is, I am not a man—but a *Bear!*"

As he finished speaking he took off his comforter, coat, and cap—and sure enough a Bear he was, and one of the largest that was ever seen!

In a very soft voice, so as scarcely to be heard by any one except the children who had crowded around her, Margaret began to sing:

"There came a rough-faced Stranger
From the leafless winter woods."

The children heard Margaret sing, and ventured to look up at the Bear. He continued to stand near the door, and as he hadn't the

least sign of anything savage in his appearance, their fear began to change to curiosity. Two of the youngest had hidden themselves in the folds of Mrs. Littlepump's dress, and little Val had crept under the table. But when these found that nothing was going to happen, and that the other children did not cry out or seem terrified, they peeped out at the Bear,—then they peeped again. At about the seventh peep they all three left their hiding places and crowded in among the rest—all looking at the Bear!

"I trust," said Dr. Littlepump, "that this discovery—this casting off all disguise—produces no change in the nature and habits you have learned in civilized society. I feel sure that I am addressing a gentleman, that is to say, a most gentlemanly specimen of bear."

"Banish all unkind suspicion from your breast, Mr. Doctor," said the Bear. "No one ever need fear from me a single rude hug,—such as my ancestors were too apt to give."

"Oh, we feel quite satisfied," said Mrs. Littlepump, "that your conduct will be of the very best kind. Pray take a seat near the fire.

The children will all make room for you."

The children all made room enough in a trice, and more than enough, as they crowded back as far as they could and left a large open circle opposite the stove.

The Bear laid one paw upon his grateful breast and advanced towards the fireplace.

"Permit me to begin with warming my nose," he said.

As the door of the stove was now closed, the Bear bent his head down, and moved his nose backwards and forwards in a sort of a semi-circle, seeming to enjoy it very much.

"As my nose is very long," said he, "the tip of it is the first part that gets cold because it is so far away from my face. I fear it may not seem a well-shaped one, but it is a capital smeller. I used to be able, when at a distance of several miles, to smell—ahem!"

Here the Bear checked himself suddenly. He was going to say something about his life at home in the woods that would not be thought very nice in Dr. Littlepump's parlour. But he just caught himself up in time. In doing this, however, his confusion at the

moment had made him neglect to observe that a part of the stove was again red hot. He came a little too close and all at once burnt the tip of his nose!

The children would certainly have laughed, but as the Bear started back he looked quickly round the room. So everybody was afraid to laugh.

"And you have, no doubt, a very fine ear for music," said Mrs. Littlepump, wishing to relieve the Bear from his embarrassment.

"I have, indeed, madam, a fine pair of ears, though I know too well that they are rather large as to size," said the Bear.

"By no means too large, sir," answered Mrs. Littlepump.

"If the whole world were hunted through and through," said the Bear, "I'm sure we should never find any other lady so amiable in speaking graciously to one of the humblest of her servants as Lady Littlepump."

'We shall be proud, sir, to place you in the list of our most particular friends. You are so modest, so polite, so handsome a Bear."

As Mrs. Littlepump finished this last

speech, the Bear looked at her for a moment—then made three great steps backwards, and made a deep bow. His bow was so very low, and he remained so very long with his nose pointing to the floor that all the children were ready to die with laughter. Little Val fell upon the floor trying to keep his laugh in, and there he lay kicking, and Margaret, who had covered her face with her handkerchief, was heard to give a sort of a little scream; and Nancy had run to the sofa, and covered her head with one of the pillows.

At length the Bear raised his head. He looked very pleasant even through all that rough hair. Turning to Dr. Littlepump, he said, "Mr. Dr. Littlepump, the extreme kindness of this reception of one who is a stranger wins me completely. If you permit me, I will tell you the whole story of my life."

At this speech everybody said, "Do let us hear the Bear's story!"

It was agreed upon, with many thanks from Dr. and Mrs. Littlepump. They placed a large chair for the Bear in the middle of the room. The Doctor took down Uncle Abra-

ham's Dutch pipe, filled it with the very best Turkey tobacco and handed it to the Bear. After carefully lighting it and taking a few whiffs, and stopping a little while to think, the Bear told the following story:

"I was born in one of the largest caves in a forest. My father and mother were regarded not only by all other bears, but by every other animal, as persons of some consequence. My father was a person of proud and resentful disposition, though of the greatest courage and honour. But my mother was one in whom all the qualities of the fairer sex were united. I shall never forget the patience, the gentleness, the skill, and the firmness with which she first taught me to walk alone—I mean to walk on all fours, of course; the upright manner of my present walking was learned afterwards. As this infant effort, however, is one of my very earliest recollections, I will give you a little account of it."

"Oh, do, Mr. Bear," cried Margaret. And no sooner had she uttered the words, than all the children cried out at the same time, "Oh, please do, sir."

The Bear took several long whiffs at his pipe and thus continued:

"My mother took me to a retired part of the forest, and told me that I must now stand alone. She slowly lowered me towards the earth. The height as I looked down seemed terrible, and I felt my legs kick in the air with fear of I know not what. Suddenly I felt four hard things, and no motion. It was the fixed earth beneath my legs. 'Now you are standing alone!' said my mother. But what she said I heard as in a dream. My back was in the air, my nose was poking out straight, snuffing the fresh breezes, my ears were pricking and shooting with all sorts of new sounds, to wonder at, to want to have, to love, or to tumble down at,—and my eyes were staring before me full of light and dancing things. Soon the firm voice of my mother came to my assistance, and I heard her tell me to look upon the earth beneath me, and see where I was.

First I looked up among the boughs, then sideways at my shoulder, then I squinted at the tip of my nose, then I bent my nose in despair, and saw my fore paws standing. The

first thing I saw distinctly was a little blue flower with a bright jewel in the middle,—a dewdrop. The next thing I saw upon the ground was a soft-looking little creature, that crawled alone with a round ball upon the middle of its back. It was of a beautiful white colour with brown and red curling stripes. The creature moved very, very slowly, and appeared always to follow two long horns on its head, that went feeling about on all sides. Presently, it approached my right fore paw, and I wondered how I should feel, or smell, or hear it, as it went over my toes. But the instant one of the horns touched the hair of my paw, both horns shrank into nothing, and presently came out again, and the creature slowly moved away in another direction. I wondered at this strange action—for I never thought of hurting the creature, not knowing how to hurt anything. While I was wondering what made the horn think I should hurt it, my attention was suddenly drawn to a tuft of moss on my right near a hollow tree-trunk. Out of this green tuft looked a pair of very bright, small, round eyes which were staring up at me. I stood

looking at the eyes, and, presently, I saw that the head was yellow, and all the face and throat yellow, and that it had a large mouth.

'What you saw a little while ago,' said my mother, 'we call a snail. And what we see now we call a frog.'

The names, however, did not help me at all to understand. Why the first should have turned from my paw so suddenly, and why this creature should continue to stare up at me in such a manner puzzled me very much. I now observed that its body and breast were double somehow, and that its paws had no hair upon them. I thought this was no doubt caused by its slow crawling which had probably rubbed it all off. Suddenly, a beam of bright light broke through the trees and this creature gave a great hop right under my nose and I, thinking the world was at an end, instantly fell flat down on one side and lay there waiting!"

At this all the children laughed; they were so delighted. The Bear laughed, too, and soon went on with his story.

"I tell you these things," he said, "in as clear a manner as I can, that you may rightly under-

stand them. My dear mother caught me up in her arms, saying, 'Oh, thou small bear! thou hast fallen flat down, on first seeing a frog hop.'

The next day my mother gave me my first lesson in walking. She took me to a nice, smooth, sandy place in the forest, not far from home, and setting me down carefully, said, 'Walk.' But I remained just where I was.

If a child with only *two* legs feels puzzled which leg it should move first, judge of the many puzzles of a young bear under such circumstances. Said I to myself, 'Shall I move my right front paw first or my left; or my right hind leg or my left? Shall I first move the two front legs both at the same time, then the two hind legs; or my two hind legs first, and then my two front legs? Shall I move the right front leg, and the right hind leg at the same time; or the left front leg and the right hind leg? Shall I try to move all four at once, and how, and which way? Or shall I move three legs at once, in order to push myself on, while one leg remains for me to balance my body upon; and if so, which three legs

should move and which one should be the leg to balance upon? Amidst all these confusing thoughts and feelings, I was afraid to move in any way. I believe I should have been standing there to this day, had not my mother, with a slow bowing and bending motion of the head and backbone, gracefully passed and repassed me several times, saying, 'Do *so,* child!—leave off thinking, and walk!'

My mother was right. As soon as I left off thinking about it, I found myself walking. Oh, what a wonderful and clever young gentleman I found myself! I went plowing along with such a serious face upon the ground! I soon ran my head against one or two trees, and a bit of rock, each of which I saw very well before I did so; but I thought they would get out of my way or slip aside, or that my head would go softly through them. My mother, therefore, took me up and carried me till we arrived within a short distance of our cave. In front of it there was a large space of high, green grass, through which a regular path had been worn by the feet of my father and mother. At the beginning of this path, my mother

placed me on the ground, and told me I must walk to the cave along the pathway all by myself. This was a great task for me. I thought I should never be able to keep in such a straight line. I felt dizzy as I looked first on one side, and then on the other, expecting every instant to tumble over into the high, green grass, on the right or left. However, I managed to get to the cave without any accident."

As the Bear finished the last sentence he suddenly rose, and drew out from beneath a thick tuft of hair on his right side, a very large watch, with a broad gold face and a tortoise-shell back.

"I must go," said he, hurrying on his short cloak, his cap, and comforter, "for it is nearly ten o'clock, and before I go to bed I have some work to do. But I will come again to-morrow night and finish my story. Mrs. Littlepump, I am your respectful and grateful, humble servant! Mr. Dr. Littlepump, I am also yours. Good night to you, Miss Nancy, and to you, little Val, and to you, pretty Miss Margaret, and to all my young friends, and all

the rest. May you all sleep well, and with happy dreams!"

"Good night," cried all the children in a loud chorus. "Oh, be sure to come to-morrow evening!"

"Good night, Mr. Bear!" cried everybody, while the stout gentleman bustled, and hustled, and rustled, and scuffled out of the room, and along the passage, and out of the street door, and into the street, where he was soon lost sight of in the snow which was now falling very fast.

Second Evening

The next evening, about dusk, all the children who had been visiting Nancy and Valentine came again in a troop, scrambling and crowding at the door to get in first. They were so anxious to hear the remainder of the Bear's story. As they all came into the room, they cried out, "Is he come?—When will he come?"

Dr. Littlepump walked up and down the room with an air of serious anxiety; anyone

could see he had something on his mind. Mrs. Littlepump also said more than once that she hoped no accident would happen on the road to prevent the coming of Mr. Bear. Margaret now became very anxious and fidgetty, and looked at Uncle Abraham, as though she was a little vexed at his indifference about the event in which everybody else took so much interest. Dorothea, Lydia, and Wallis, all said they, for their parts, had been unable to sleep all last night for thinking of the stout gentleman's story. But nothing of all this seemed to move Uncle Abraham, who sat smoking his Dutch pipe and twinkling his eyes. Presently, however, the clock struck five, and he rose from his chair, saying he must go and make a little visit a few doors off before he went to bed. They all begged him very hard to stay and see Mr. Bear, but he shook his head, and said, "Pooh" and walked away. Margaret looked pleased when he was gone, but the children said it was very naughty of him not to stay.

Margaret said, "Let us play a little game until Mr. Bear arrives."

"Yes," said all the children.

They began to play the game, but they did not attend to it. Their minds were too much filled with the expectation of Mr. Bear.

"Oh, I do hope the gentleman Bear will be sure to come," cried little Val.

As he said this they very plainly heard the sound of a horse's hoofs coming up the street. They all ran to the window. What was their surprise and delight to see that it was the Bear on horseback! As the horse stopped before Dr. Littlepump's door, the stout gentleman in the rough coat bent forward, then let himself slowly down, hanging carefully till his fur boots touched the ground. At this all the children burst out laughing; but instantly recollecting themselves, they ran away from the windows, and scrambled into seats round the stove, coughing a little, to pretend it had been only that. And now a knock was heard at the door and a loud ring! Margaret ran and opened the door and in came the Bear.

Everybody was so glad to see him. Wallis and Margaret helped him to take off his cloak and comforter. Mrs. Littlepump begged him

to take a seat near the stove. Dorothea presented him with a large cup of nice coffee, hot, and strong, and very sweet, and Dr. Littlepump handed him Uncle Abraham's pipe.

Everybody being now comfortably settled, the Bear rose from his chair, and, bowing all round, looked at Dr. Littlepump and said, "Mr. Dr. Littlepump, let me know what is the wish of our young friends here?"

"Oh, Mr. Good-Natured Bear!" cried Nancy, "do please continue your delightful story!"

The Bear laid one paw upon his heart,—bowed—sat down—and after looking thoughtfully into the bowl of his pipe for a few minutes, as if to collect his ideas, thus continued:

"At the foot of our cave, there was, as I have told you, a plot of high, green grass with a path through it up to the entrance. At the back of the rock in which the cave was, there grew several fine old oak trees, and some young elms, all promising to become very tall and beautiful. My father was very fond of walking alone among those fine trees.

One afternoon he was taking a nap on our

bed of leaves in the cave, when he was aroused by a noise at the back of the rock, among the trees. The sound was that of a number of hard blows one after another. My father went to see what it was, and there he saw a woodman with an axe cutting down the young elms. In perfect rage, my father ran towards the man, who instantly scampered away as fast as he could, crying out: 'Oh! Oh! Oh!'

The next morning as soon as it was light the same noise was heard again among the trees. Up jumped my father, but my mother, fearing some danger, went with him. It was a good thing she did so, as the forester had brought his two sons with loaded guns to watch for my father while the woodman was at work. My mother saw the two youths each hiding behind a large tree and she begged my father, both for her sake and mine, to come away. At last he did so, though not without much gruffness and grumbling.

By the evening the woodman had cut down about a third part of the young elms. Then he went away, intending to come and carry them off in the morning. My mother tried to per-

suade my father not to interfere because it was too near our home. But my father said they were *his* trees and he could not bear to lose them. So at night he collected all the trees that were cut down, and carried them, one or two at a time, to a river, at a short distance, where the current was strong, and threw them in with a great splash. Long before morning the current had carried them all far away.

The next day the woodman came with his two sons, a team of horses, and ropes to drag the trees away. But there was not one to be seen! After wondering and sitting under an oak for an hour, the woodman again went to work with his axe and cut down more young elm trees. He sent one son back with the horses, as they were needed for the plow.

In the evening the woodman went away as before, leaving the trees, and thinking no one would steal them a second time. But at night my father went as before and threw them all into the river. In the morning the woodman came again with the team. 'What!' cried he, 'All gone again!—it must be the work of some fairy! Thieves could never carry away clean

out of sight all those heavy young trees,—unless, indeed, it were the Forty Thieves, for it would need as many.'

Again the woodman cut down the trees and now there was not an elm left standing. He went away in the evening, as before, leaving the trees upon the ground. My father was sallying out to carry them off in the same way as before when my mother said, 'Do *not* go, Benjamin (we always spoke in Bear language, you know, and not as I talk to you), do *not* go to-night, Benjamin, I beg you!'

'Why, that unfeeling rascal has cut down all my young elms and the next thing you know he will cut down my oaks. I will *not* endure it,' said my father angrily.

'But this is by no means certain,' reasoned my mother. 'He seems to want only the elms. And at the worst we could find another cave with oaks near it.'

'But not with oaks and a nice river, too!' said my father.

'Then the child (meaning me) and I must go with you and help to do it as quickly as possible. After it is done we will go and sleep

for a few nights in the forest over the northern hills, for my mind is very uneasy about matters,' said my mother.

My father laughed and said 'GOOFF-ZUGDT,' which, in Bear language, means 'Nonsense!'

So we all went out of the cave and worked away at a great rate. My father and mother carried the largest of the young trees, and I such of the smallest as my tender years would allow. By midnight we had just finished and my father was carrying the last tree, when suddenly a shout was heard and we saw a flash of torches! The trees had been seen floating downstream, by some men who were coming to watch for the thieves, or to see if it was the work of fairies.

'Cross the stream, higher up, and run for the northern hills,' shouted my mother. At the same time she seized me by one ear in her mouth and lugged me along till we came to the river bank. Instantly she soused me into the water. When I came to the surface, I instantly felt my ear again in my mother's warm mouth, and we soon landed on the other side.

My father was not with us. We took it for granted that he had run in some other direction, and would rejoin us shortly. The shouts, however, followed us and so did the men with torches. My mother never once looked behind, but ran, lugging me along by one ear, through fields and woods, up hill and down dale. At last she laid me on some warm leaves under thick bushes. But my father did not join us. We never saw him again. He was captured and taken to the village.

My poor father was now lost to us; therefore, my mother set herself busily to work at my education. She divided every day into various portions; and although a large share was given to amusement in which I played with several young bears of my own age, and had sometimes a gambol with other young animals, still there was nothing that gave me more pleasure than the lessons I received from her. For this purpose she would generally take me into some quiet part of the wood. There, under a wide-spreading tree, she taught my young ideas 'how to shoot!' One lesson in particular, I remember, as she took great pains

to impress it on my memory. I have followed the idea in all my conduct through life and I can truly say with the best results to myself. I will recite for you the verse which tells the lesson she taught

Oh! thou small Bear,
Learn to bear, and forbear,
And of good luck, or good friends, never despair.

A few days after I had received this lesson, I found myself placed in a situation which needed the good advice of the little verse. An extremely well-behaved young pig, and a very merry little fox, with whom I was playing, asked me what I had been doing the other day near a certain hollow tree. I told them I often collected acorns there in the morning and went in the evening to eat them. They said no more, and we went on playing round about the trees—and sometimes climbing up them—that is—the merry little fox and I did this. The young wild pig could not. But after that day, whenever I collected acorns in the morning

and put them into the hollow tree, and then went at night to eat them, they were all gone!

One evening, however, as I was returning home after my disappointment and wondering who it could be, I heard a laughing in the thickets, and entering suddenly there I saw the little fox and my friend the wild pig who were just going to run away when they saw me. They both looked very foolish as our eyes met. So the thought struck me that they were the thieves, and I at once accused them. The wild pig became angry and denied that he had stolen a single acorn. He said he would not be called a thief by anybody. The little fox said he had never eaten a single acorn in all his life, nor had his father before him. Also, he said he would not be called a glutton by anybody.

On hearing this I understood how it all was. 'Jemmy,' said I, fixing my eyes upon the little fox, 'Jemmy! you know very well that you stole my acorns. We have often played together and this is the first bad trick you have served me. You know I am quite able to punish you severely, and take your tail

away from you. But I forgive you this time.'

Then I turned to the young wild pig and said, 'Hugo, you have *eaten* my acorns. You know that I am stronger than you, that I could throw my arms around your neck and give you *such* a one! (meaning a hard hug)—but I forbear for the sake of our old friendship. I feel sure this will never happen again, and, no doubt, we shall all be better friends than ever.'

At this, the little fox shed a great many tears, and continued to rub his eyes with his little yellow brush for five minutes afterwards. The wild young pig stood silently for some time, as if he were trying to understand all about it. When he did speak it was only *'ouff'* —but I thought he felt what I had said.

At night, when we were going to bed, I told the whole story to my mother. She said I had acted rightly, according to what she had taught me in the verse. 'For what,' said she, 'would have been the use of beating and squeezing the young thieves? It would not have brought back the acorns, and would have made them both enemies in the future, ready

to steal anything. But as it is you have got two friends, and lost nothing.'

After thinking a moment, I said, 'Yes, Mother, but I've lost my acorns!'

'They are not more lost than if you had eaten them,' said my mother. 'When a thing is eaten, it is lost. All you have to complain of is that the wild young pig ate them for you. But as you have forgiven him of course you ought to think no more of the matter. Act thus through life toward your fellow creatures. Do so for the sake of the verse I taught you, and trust to nature for good results. Now, child, go to sleep.'

In this manner I passed my early youth and was just coming to my full size and strength when the dreadful thing happened which I spoke of when I first had the honour of talking to the present company. It was the terrible thing which made me an orphan in the world.

We were greeted one evening by a very ragged but wise old ape who had managed to escape from the menagerie in the big city. He was disguised as a Chinese tea-merchant, and he begged a night's lodging, as he thought

himself out of all danger. He told us news about my poor father. He was put in a menagerie in the village and there he grieved himself to death.

My mother never recovered after this sad news. She made no complaint, nor did she appear to give way to grief, but she gradually sank, and sank. Her feet failed her and her teeth fell out. One night, in a more than usually affectionate manner she had her last talk with me. She told me to act always with honesty, truth, and good feeling towards everyone; to bear all injuries and misfortunes as firmly as I could. She begged me in all dealings to keep from feelings of revenge and hatred. She then gave me an embrace, and told me to sleep well, and remember her words. In the morning I found her lying dead upon the moist green grass, with her head gently resting upon one paw.

As the Bear uttered these last words, he seemed overcome with many feelings and thoughts of other years. Then, suddenly rising from his chair, he hastily put on his hat and cloak, and hurried out of the room. His

friends heard the sound of the street-door closing, and two of the children ran on tiptoe to the window; but he was out of sight.

Third Evening

The next evening the children all met again, in the hope that the Good-Natured Bear would come to finish his story.

"I am so much afraid he will never come again," said Nancy. "What *shall* we do.

"What *shall* we do?" echoed all the children.

"For my part, I think that he will come," said Mrs. Littlepump.

"I am sure I hope so," said Margaret. "Dear, how my heart beats!"

"Your heart beats for Mr. Bear?" said Dr. Littlepump, looking hard at Margaret, who instantly blushed up to her eyes, and her ears were as red as ripe cherries.

"Oh, I do so wish——" said little Valentine, and then he stopped.

"What do you wish, Valentine?" asked Mr. Doctor, looking at his watch.

"I wish we had Jemmy here!"

"Jemmy! what Jemmy?" inquired Mr. Doctor with a serious face.

"Why, Jemmy, the merry little fox with the yellow brush tail!" said Val.

At this moment the clock struck six, and without any knocking, or ringing, or any other announcement, the parlour door opened and in walked Mr. Bear!

He bowed with his usual politeness; but he had a more than usual air of gravity and some appearance of anxiety. Margaret placed his chair for him and this seemed to please him.

"I thank you, Miss Margaret," said he, and he soon became cheerful.

Looking around with a smile, and particularly at Margaret, he asked if he might go on with his story.

"Oh, do, Sir!—please do!" cried a dozen voices at once. So he continued as follows:

"I must now tell you about my own captivity, and I fear there were several times when I did not follow my mother's advice but really lost my temper for some minutes. I had

scarcely reached my full growth when a party of hunters came to the forest where I lived and surprising me while I was asleep, caught me fast in a very strong rope net. I made a great struggle. Three of the hunters stepped a few paces back and leveled their guns with the intention of shooting me. At this moment an immense wild pig rushed out of a thicket and crying 'ouff!' charged right upon the three hunters—knocked them all three flat upon their backs like ninepins—and then dashed into the thicket on the opposite side! Up jumped the three hunters, very angry, and instantly fired their guns into the thicket after the wild pig. But he was out of their reach. Another of the hunters was now about to thrust his spear at me when suddenly he gave a loud cry, and flung his spear at a tree, close to the foot of which we saw a large yellow and red brush tail whisk round.

'Oh,' cried the hunter. 'Some rascal of a fox has bitten me in the foot!'

I need not tell you who these two forest friends were who had thus saved my life. You have already guessed.

"Jemmy and Hugo," whispered the children.

"Jemmy and Hugo, grown up!" nodded Mr. Bear.

"The hunters now began to talk together about whether I might not be of more value to them alive in a menagerie than if they killed me. They spoke of my rich, bright, brown-coloured fur, my large size, my youth. At length they decided to send me to a menagerie. Some of them said that a live bear was a great trouble on a long journey.

I now saw that it was of no use to make any further struggle among so many armed men, so I became very quiet. The cords that bound me had become partially loose at the arms. The son of the hunter, who had been about to kill me with his spear, happened to come close to me. I slowly freed one paw and instead of seizing the boy roughly, I slowly raised myself to an upright position behind his back and then patted him gently upon the top of his head. This surprised, amused, and won the hearts of all the hunters. They said it was quite impossible to kill such a *good-natured*

bear, and from that day they called me *The Good-Natured Bear.*

I remember very well an event of my journey with my captors, which led to my learning to dance. We were all seated in a pleasant wood at sunset. One of the men drew forth a clarionet, another a horn and began to play. For the fisrt time in my life I heard what you call music. I was filled with joy, and, being quite unable to control myself, I rose on my hind legs of my own accord, and stepped in time to the music. At this the hunters loosened the ropes which held me and gave me more freedom. In this upright position I stepped to the middle of an open green space and continued to keep time to the merry tune which was played. The hunters shouted and laughed and laughed and shouted. The music became faster and louder. Round and round I waltzed, and the trees all began to dance round me, too. Then the green ground span round about, carrying all the hunters and the music in a swift, dizzy circle round me. I feared I was going mad and I determined to save myself. Therefore, I collected all my

willpower and stopped turning. The instant I stood still, the ground slipped from beneath my feet, and away I rolled to the bottom of a hill, where I fell asleep.

From this time, I continually practised walking upright. At first it was very difficult to walk for any distance on my hind feet. I could not help bending my nose and looking all down my right side, then all down my left side, and so from side to side, for I seemed such a height above the ground. Also, in order to keep my balance, I was obliged to give my weight first on one leg, then on the other, without lifting them from the ground.

My captors took me to a menagerie, where I was more than comfortable. My food was very good and my water was always clear and fresh. I also had far more liberty than any other animal. I believe this kindness was shown me because I showed no anger or hatred towards anyone, also, I was very careful not to frighten or hurt any of the children, who came near me.

In time I became the principal object of attraction in this menagerie. Crowds came

daily and stood in front of my cell and looked, and pointed, and often spoke to me till at last I came to see that I was regarded as a surprising example of wisdom, although I did not understand one word they spoke to me, except when they also made signs. Sometimes, however, I was able to connect sounds with signs, so that I actually learned the meaning of many words. Then first came to me the great desire to learn human speech. I thought since I had learned the meaning of many words why could I not learn many more? And when I had learned certain sounds thoroughly why could I not imitate those words, so as to speak as well as understand?

I determined to do this if possible and I studied very hard. I listened very carefully all day to those whom I heard speaking and at night I practised my voice. At first I could make no sound at all like words, but only strange noises, so that it woke some of the animals, who made a great grumbling, and three of the monkeys mocked me for a week after, chattering, pointing, and making mouths at me. However, I went on trying, and at the

end of four years, I understood nearly all that was said to me, even without signs, and could pronounce a number of words very well, though, of course, with rather a foreign accent. I proved this to myself upon two or three occasions, when it was dark and no one knew where the voice came from. By the answers I received I always found that what I had said was understood. Nevertheless, I kept all this a secret.

By this time I was made a show of by myself, and separated from all the other animals in one large corner, which was parted off by a green curtain in front. An additional price was charged to see me. I did not know what in the world they might do with me, if they found they possessed a Bear who could talk! I often longed to be free. I was very tired indeed of this kind of crowding and staring life, and I longed for the beautiful quiet of my native woods. But there seemed no hope of escape.

In the ninth year of my captivity and, I may add, of my private studies, I was sent round the country in a caravan with three

keepers who made a great deal of money by me, at the various fairs and markets. I was called on the placards outside, 'The Intellectual Bear!'

There was also another captive in the caravan,—a large serpent. I tried to be friendly with him but he never noticed me. He was usually asleep, rolled up on a heap of blankets, in a box. When he was awake his eyes were generally shut, and he seemed in a sort of a stupid trance so that we formed no acquaintance. I longed more than ever for my liberty.

One night—it was a hot night in June—after a long journey, while our keepers were away at supper the serpent broke open his box. Presently his head went slowly gliding up to one of the windows, and moved all over the inside shutter. It had not been properly locked, and it opened a little way. Upon this, the serpent raised himself upwards by his mouth, opening the shutter gradually as he rose, till he had coiled about half his body up against the window-frame, and then, with a slow pressure—he burst it open. The next

moment he dropped silently through the opening—and was gone!

In an instant the thought of liberty flashed through my mind! I grasped the wooden bars of my cell, with both arms, and crushed three of them together. I jumped down upon the floor of the caravan, and scrambled up to the window. It was too small to let my body through, but I tore away the framework and out I got, and leaped down upon fresh, cool grass in the fresh, cool, night air! Oh, what delight after that steaming hot caravan! I ran off as fast as I could. A few stars were shining. Luckily there was no moon. Our caravan had fortunately been fixed outside the town, so that I had no gates to pass through. I scampered along, dodging between the trees of the avenue just as if I had been pursued, though not a soul was to be seen at that hour; then I cut across some fields and reached a vineyard. Scrambling on through garden and orchard and wood, I came to the highroad which led to a large city. Again I plunged into some vineyards till suddenly I came to a great river which I swam quickly across and

landed a little above a village. Again I lost myself in the vineyards, but I did the best I could to avoid villages and pathways leading to towns, for I feared I might meet a party of travelers who would make it known where they had seen me. I knew there would be a wide search for me. So I made my way upward towards some distant mountains. At last I came to a forest where the trees were very large. Up one of them I slowly climbed, being careful not to scrape or leave any marks upon the bark of the tree. Choosing a snug place where several large boughs crossed each other, I bent some of the smaller ones round about, so that I was carefully hidden from all eyes below.

The next morning, as I was sure would be the case, I heard all sorts of noises of hunters and dogs all over the country. Several parties passed directly beneath the tree where I was seated. I heard one of the dogs give such a sniff. Oh! how closely I hugged the trunk of that tree, with my nose pointing up the stem, and not once venturing to look down! I hoped with all my heart not to be seen. This

search continued for several days round about me. I never descended and I had nothing to eat. Once it rained in the night, and I drank the water off the leaves, taking whole bunches at a time into my mouth. This quite refreshed me. Nobody ever found me out, except that one morning an old crow with a bright, black eye, came and peeped at me, but as soon as he saw who it was he flew away, crying out, *'Lawk! Lawk!'*

At length the search after me was continued in other parts of the country, and one night I came down to stretch my legs, and sniff about a bit, and see what the world was made of—ahem! I had not walked far before I came to a spot where the hunters had paused to rest and refresh themselves. Here I found two things which had been dropped by some accident—namely, a purse with some money in it and a very large pork pie! The purse I placed in a thicket under a stone, but I had immediate need of the pie. I ate half of it that night; I was so very hungry. The remainder I carried with me up the tree, and made it last five days.

Though I never stopped watching or for-

got my caution, the fear I at first had of being discovered and recaptured was very much lessened, so that my mind was free to follow its own course of self-improvement. I continued to practice speaking with the greatest care, repeating all the sentences I knew, and every word I could recollect. I did this so often in order to master the pronunciation that sometimes when I ceased I had a pain in my lower jaw, which lasted for half an hour. However, I continually persevered. I had now practised speaking a human language for nearly twelve years. I spoke very badly I knew; still, I had sometimes found what I said in the dark when I was in the menagerie, had been understood and I was full of hope. How and in what manner to make my first appearance among mankind, was quite a puzzle to me. One preparation as to my personal appearance I knew I must make. I grieved at it. I objected to the narrowness of mind which I knew made it necessary,—yet I knew also that it must be done.

In the early morning of the world, everything was new and wonderful beyond all

doubt; but not more new and wonderful than useful and necessary to carry out the future business of creation. Who can deny the high origin of tails? The first animal who was active and well-formed must have had a tail. Of its great importance it would take too much time at present to speak. But even in these modern times how much use and ornament it possesses must be seen by everybody when they think of the lion, the dog, the eagle, the swallow, the monkey, the squirrel, and the fish. Running, leaping, flying, swimming are all helped very much indeed by the tail. Of its use as a fan in sultry weather, as a whisker-away of gnats and flies, I will make no mention. Then, what a tail the beaver has and who is more skilful than he? I will stop. You see I have no tail. Since I had made up my mind to live with mankind it was necessary to accept most of their customs. In short, I found I must give up my tail. This I did at the sacrifice of some private feelings, I assure you.

You must be curious, I think, to hear how I made my first appearance among the circles

of mankind, and I will hasten to tell you. Most fortunately, I had a little money, the value of which I knew pretty well. I made my way cautiously across the country into a town one dark evening of a market-day, and with my money I managed to purchase a large pair of shoes, a pair of cow-skin gloves, a piece of gingerbread, and a sheet of white paper. With these materials I made my way to a large city where a great fair was being held.

I chose a dark corner on the outskirts of the fair and spread my sheet of white paper upon the ground. On this white paper I placed a score of gingerbread pills, and, with beating heart and shaking limbs, I addressed the human race on the subject of pills, for I had heard people were very much interested in this subject. I was so alarmed at speaking to a group of such wise beings that even at the time I did not well know what I was saying. However, the moment I began to speak, a number of persons came round me and laughed loudly. I thought I was found out, and stopped.

'Go on, Doctor! Go on!' cried they. So I went on. A crowd soon collected, all of whom laughed very much, saying, 'What a voice! Look at his nose! Did you ever hear such language! What a figure!'

They bought all my gingerbread pills in a very short time, and I was only able to make my escape by telling them I must go to my lodgings for some more.

Oh, how shall I describe the joy and exultation I felt at the great success of my experiment upon the wise and generous human race! I was obliged to double the price of my gingerbread pills in order to prevent them from going so fast. Everything I said produced immense laughter, even when I myself knew I had said no witty or sensible thing at all, while any ordinary reply was received with shouts of applause. They believed that my strange voice, dialect, face, figure, and behaviour were all a part of my make-up, and that I was acting a part! In fact, they thought I could speak and appear very differently, if I liked. I did not feel altogether pleased at this discovery; but I was obliged to take what came

and make the most of it. I, therefore, spoke as well as I could, and when I made some shocking blunder, I allowed the people to suppose that I knew better.

I now took my position in society. I had lodgings in a house, and I slept in a bed! I shall never forget the first night I slept in a bed. How I stood looking at the snow-white luxury! and walked round it softly, holding my breath. I touched it very gently, but at last I did muster courage and actually got between the sheets!

I visited other large fairs with increased success, so that in the course of a year or two I had gained a great sum of money.

I soon became famous at all the great fairs where, by some, I was called the Whimsical Doctor, on account of my odd dress, face, and voice, all of which people regarded as my make-up. Several wealthy people whom I met at these fairs offered to go into partnership with me. At last I consented. I took as my partner a clever man named Tobias, who was a jeweller. He sold all his jewels, or rather, he turned all his jewels into ginger-

bread, and we made wagon-loads of gingerbread pills. In making the large quantities of these, however, Tobias talked to me in a way which caused me to feel, for the first time, that this method of dealing with the human race was not honourable. I began to see that human beings were not so wise as I had imagined, and that nobody ought to cheat them. The more my partner talked over our success the more I felt we were rogues. So one morning I told him that I wished to dissolve our partnership. 'Ah,' said he, 'then, as you leave me, of course you will leave with me all the stock in trade, and all the money, too.' 'No,' said I, 'not all the money. Take all the pills, and welcome; but give me back half the money.' He refused. We spoke sharply to each other and suddenly he said to me, angrily, 'You shall have nothing. If you say anything more I will tell what I have found out about you. I know what you are. You are not a man—but a *bear!*'

I was thunderstruck! I fell back into my infant years as if I had fallen over a cliff. I felt I was a bear! But the next moment I

seized Tobias in my arms, and lifted him up in the air, saying in a loud voice: 'Wicked fellow! what shall I do to you?' At this moment, however, I recollected my mother's words. I set him down upon the ground, where he stood quite breathless with fright. Then I said to him, 'Ungrateful man—dishonest partner,—take my money and go thy ways in peace.'

Not knowing what to do, and certainly not knowing what to think, I wandered about the country. Sometimes I sat under hedges and puzzled my brains to understand what sort of thing human reason was. I never could make it out. However, I knew that I was an imposter,—though an innocent imposter, since I could not help wearing a fur coat and a long nose.

One day when I was seated under a tree, eating a turnip, who should pass by but Tobias, all in rags, and looking very ill. Suddenly, he saw me, uttered a cry, and fell down in a fit. I went to him and placed the cool wet leaves of my turnip across his temples. This seemed to revive him and do him good.

When he saw that I had no intention to hurt him he asked me to carry him to the nearest peasant's cottage. I did so and was going away when he called me back and said, 'I behaved very badly to you, but I was punished. When you left me nobody would buy the pills. The people called loudly for the Wonderful Doctor with the fur coat and the large nose who talked so oddly. As you were not to be found, they said I was a rascal, and an impostor, and they drove me out of the town. I was quite ruined. They seized all our pills and flung them about and the boys pelted each other with pill-boxes in the streets for at least three hours. The very same wonderful pills the world had just before been running after.'

In a few months after this Tobias had a fortune left him by a relation. He sent for me, begged my pardon for his previous behaviour, set me up in business as a merchant, and took great pains to instruct me. In the winter I dealt in pickles and preserves; and in the summer I carried on a wholesale trade in silks and velvets. He wanted me to sell furs

also, but I declined that. These occupations I have followed ever since, with great industry and good success. Meantime, however, at all leisure hours I have tried to improve my mind by various studies, and, among others, I even managed to make some progress in mathematics.

As Mr. Bear said this, all the children thought directly of Uncle Abraham, the mathematician, and were so sorry he was not present to hear about these studies.

"I should now," continued the stout gentleman, "consider myself very happy, but for one circumstance. I confess I do not like to mention it."

How can this small heart contain
So large a world of joy and pain;
And how can this small tongue declare
All that is felt so deeply there!
Alas, poor Bear!—Alas, poor Bear!

You will all readily understand that to have raised myself by my own efforts so much above the rest of my species, I must have had

a nature open to many thoughts and feelings; and that the peculiar tenderness instilled by my mother had grown with my growth, and made me open to all the softer emotions."

Mr. Bear here paused and gave a deep sigh. Several of the younger children sighed too. Gretchen fixed her eyes upon the floor.

"I was not aware for some time," said the sorrowful gentleman in the rough coat, "of what kind of feelings had begun to possess me. I felt I was alone in the world. I had long felt that,—but I had so much to do, so much to learn and struggle with, and work at, and so much travelling about and business to attend to, that I did not feel this being alone as any great grief. Besides, as I had been successful in the various difficult things I had attempted, and had for a long time been very fortunate in all my affairs of business, I was in the habit of regarding myself as a happy person. And I *was* happy, until I began to think that others were more so, and then I saw it was because others, who were happy, could share it with those they loved and also give happiness to the dear object. But I was alone

in the world. I had nobody to love. Nobody would ever love me,—except another bear. And you know that the love of another bear was out of the question to one in my advanced state of refinement. What was I to do? I could have loved a dear object—a great many, I am sure—I was going to say—I beg pardon —I do not quite well know *what* I say at this exciting moment. But—let me try to tell you, that I felt it impossible to live all my life without some tender acquaintance with the little god of love, and as I was by this time long past the season of youth, I was resolved to let my heart be lost with the first object that should present herself to my fancy.

But, strange to relate, no sooner had I made up my mind to fall in love with the first amiable and lovely person I saw than I ceased to meet with any such as I often used to see before. So I began to think the wish had left me, and I determined to study something very difficult in order to occupy my mind, and perhaps cure myself of these lovely fancies. I, therefore, decided to take a course of studies under Mr. Professor Abraham Littlepump,

and with tnat view I first came to this village. I arrived in the evening as you know, but did not intend to have made my visit till next morning, had I not been attracted by the loud merriment of our young friends here. It has always happened that Mr. Professor Abraham Littlepump has been absent when I paid you a visit; but this does not concern me in regard to the mathematics. I have seen one here in this room—who has put all the mathematics clean out of my head. And now comes the end of my story."

As Mr. Bear uttered those words everybody began to look all round the room and then at each other and then all round the room again.

"Who can Mr. Good-Natured Bear mean?" said Nancy in a whisper to one of the older boys.

"Margaret dear," said little Valentine, "your ears are as red as my scarlet-runner."

"Silence!" said Dr. Littlepump.

"Pity an unfortunate creature," said the stout gentleman. "I have at length seen the object of my devout wishes. Yes, in this very

room in this house—have I seen just exactly what I have been speaking of. You understand me?" There was no answer.

"Oh, that I could have had the honour and happiness of being your brother Abraham! I would have devoted my mind to far more beautiful thoughts. Seated in his arm-chair and thinking about mathematical problems he never dreamed of the charming object that was continually before him, sometimes singing to the children, sometimes teaching them to read, and to dance, sometimes working with her delightful needle. Oh, let me change places with him—the cold, insensible, stick of a slate pencil! Now I know what I am saying—or rather I do not very well know what I am saying."

Poor Mr. Bear here began to cry, and several of the children cried too. But he went on with his strange speech all the same.

"Let Mr. Professor Uncle Abraham stay where he is, with his problems and dumps, and let me be allowed to remain in his place and sit in his chair, so that I may enjoy the happy society of the sweet-voiced Margaret,

nursery-governess in the amiable family of Mr. Dr. Littlepump."

As he concluded the last sentence the unhappy gentleman sank back in his chair, and Gretchen covered her face entirely with both hands.

"I only dare to speak of my affection for this sweet creature. I know I am old for her, too ugly, besides being a Bear. I know I have no hope, but what can I do? How can I help this beating heart? What is to become of me?"

By this time all the children had tears in their eyes. Nancy and little Valentine, however, got close to Gretchen, holding her fast on each side, for fear that perhaps poor Mr. Bear might want to carry her away. Everybody was silent.

At last Nancy ventured to say in a trembling voice, "Perhaps, dear Mr. Bear, you might find somebody else?"

"Oh, that I had eloquence!" exclaimed the Bear. "Oh, that the best words would come of themselves in the best places, while other best words were getting themselves ready to be

poured out! Then I should be able to touch the human heart. But, as it is, all my hopes are vanity,—are in fact nothing at all. I must leave this busy scene and go to some quiet place where I am not known. I will again visit the haunts of my childhood and stay there. Oh! my native woods! Ye silent nights, ye small bright stars playing bo-peep through the boughs into hollow caves! I will go back among you, and in the cool, green grass will I lay my head. Farewell! Farewell!"

"But can nothing be done for you, sir?" said Mrs. Littlepump in a soft voice.

"My dear Margaret," said Doctor Littlepump, "you hear what Mrs. Littlepump asks. It is for you to make some kind of an answer. I wish my brother Abraham were here!"

"I can never love the gentleman in the rough coat," said Margaret, still holding one hand before her face. "I do not mind his being much older than myself, nor do I think him so very, very ugly—only, he is a Bear!"

"I am a devoted Bear!" declared the stout gentleman with enthusiasm, "and I will be

anything else I can, that the dear object may command."

"I have had a dream!" said Margaret timidly looking up and waiting. "I have had a dream!"

"So have I," said Dr. Littlepump sternly. "Come, come, I begin to feel uncomfortable."

"Do not feel so!" exclaimed Mr. Bear, clasping his paws together.

"Make haste!" continued the Doctor, fixing his eyes upon Margaret. "Make haste! Let us hear your dream."

"I dreamed," said Margaret, trembling, "that Mr. Bear must go into that closet, and be locked in. Then, all the children were to form a magic circle in the middle of the room, and move slowly round, hand in hand, nine times, saying:

'Oh, Mr. Bear!
Cupid hears your fond prayer!
Remember your mother's words,—never
despair!'

After this, a glass of lemonade and a slice

of cake were to be placed ready for each to take the moment the door was opened, and they saw that the charm was complete. I dreamed this would cause Mr. Bear to be made happy somehow. And then——"

"And then?" said Dr. Littlepump, "what then? I repeat I am beginning to feel very uncomfortable. I smell a plot!"

"Oh, we shall soon see what the dream will do," said Mrs. Littlepump. "Mr. Bear, will you run all risks of what may happen, and go into the closet?"

"I will do anything, dear Mrs. Littlepump!" exclaimed Mr. Bear. Saying this, he ran towards the closet headforemost. The door was open. The children all peeped in and looked round cautiously to see if anybody was there, but it was quite empty. A large mirror hung on the wall, at the further end. Mr. Bear stepped in, and waited for what might happen to him.

"All in the dark!" said little Valentine, "and the door locked!"

The children now formed a circle in the middle of the room, and while Margaret was

pouring out glasses of lemonade, and Lydia and Dorothea were cutting slices of cake, and Wallis was cleaning his spectacles, and Dr. and Mrs. Littlepump were standing silently holding each other by both hands—the children turned in a circle nine times, repeating the words of the charm:

"Oh, Mr. Bear!
Cupid hears your fond prayer!
Remember your mother's words—never
despair."

When they had finished Mrs. Littlepump unlocked the closet door. Everybody was so silent.

"Margaret," whispered Mrs. Littlepump, "go and tap at the door."

Margaret did so, and then the door slowly began to open. It stopped opening, and a voice inside said, "You must take my hand, or I cannot come out."

And then a well-formed hand was put forth. With a face all scarlet with blushes Margaret gently took it. And then—who should come

out of the closet but dear Uncle Abraham!

"Here is dear Uncle Abraham!" shouted all the children, "but where is the Bear?"

The children all ran right into the closet, scrambling, squeaking, and searching all about, but finding nothing! Soon they came crowding, and began to run round Uncle Abraham.

"Where is the fascinating rough gentleman?" cried everybody in the room.

"Here I am!" exclaimed a soft hoarse voice, as if from a great distance.

They all looked round and round. Nobody like Mr. Bear was to be seen.

"I am become a happy Shadow!" continued the voice, *"and I have left my dear friend and mathematical tutor in my place!"*

The voice seemed still as distant as before; and yet, somehow, it appeared to come from the closet. Into the closet, therefore, all the children again rushed pell mell. They were no sooner in than they suddenly gave a great shout;—and then became quite silent as with some new wonder.

The rest of the party hastened to the closet.

The children were all looking in the mirror which hung at the other end, and in it were distinctly seen the reflection in miniature of Mr. Bear, very nicely shaved round the chin, and dressed as a nobleman in a court dress. He was dancing a polka on the lawn of a castle made of clouds, with another Shadow dressed exactly like Margaret, only still prettier, while the figure of Cupid sat on the tip-top of one of the turrets, holding his quiver like a violin, and playing delightfully upon it with his bow.

Presently the whole vanished. There was nothing to be seen in the mirror except the wondering faces of those who went close up to it.

Out came all the children, one by one, with looks of equal pleasure and bewilderment.

"I was not altogether prepared for this," said Dr. Littlepump.

"Oh," said Mrs. Littlepump, "the Land of Shadows is full of delights of all kinds; and as to your brother's affair of the heart, it is not the first time that a grave man fell in love with a merry girl. It was, at least, as natural

in him as in Mr. Bear—not to speak unkindly or disrespectfully of our dear departed friend.

"But it certainly *is* the first time," said Dr. Littlepump, "that a Bear, however good-natured, was so lucky as to become a Happy Shadow, such as you describe, and to be able to bequeath a young bride to his tutor. In fact, my brain is confused upon several points. And the more I reflect, the more my head goes round. Brother! I always used to consider you a strong-minded man—but now——"

"You will dance at my wedding!" said Abraham Littlepump.

"I will," said Dr. Littlepump. "God bless you, brother Abraham. Good-natured Bear, indeed! Poor gentleman! I do not mean to say anything at all unkind—but I *do* say, bless my soul!"

"My good brother," said Abraham Littlepump, "as for Mr. Bear, we shall ever retain the tenderest recollections of him. He was thrown upon an unfeeling world, and was unhappy. But he is very happy now, somewhere else. For has he not vanished into the

Land of Shadows, there to dance forever on a green lawn, with the image of his adorations!"

"I rejoice extremely to hear it!" cried Dr. Littlepump, catching up his flute; "and I feel persuaded that I am at this moment inspired to play the very same polka which Cupid has just played to Mr. Bear and his bride!"

At this the children all set up a long hearty shout of applause; and when they were quite done Dr. Littlepump applauded himself—at which they all began again. Then the children, still laughing, formed a circle, hand in hand, round Dr. and Mrs. Littlepump, and Abraham Littlepump and Margaret, and danced round and round them. And they sang the following rhyme, in which the Bear was lovingly included, just as if he had been present, because his memory was so dear to them all. The Doctor accompanied them on his flute.

"Oh, Doctor! Oh, Bear!
Oh, new-married pair!
Of good luck and good friends
Oh, never despair!"

Abraham Littlepump now became so overjoyed, that he was unable to contain himself. He hugged them all round, and finally catching the Doctor in his arms, made him get up behind him pick-a-back. Then Mrs. Littlepump and Margaret joined hands with the circle of children, and they all danced round the two brothers, singing the rhyme again, while the Doctor flourished his flute in the air, like the conductor of some great band of music.

CHRISTMAS WISHES

Louise Chollet

King Nutcracker prepared for the Christmas feast with uncommon splendour, for on that day Santa Claus had promised his three sons—what do you suppose? A pony or a boat apiece? Of what use to bring such things to Prince Nutcracker and Prince Buttons, who were men, while for the little Prince Pepin, he had everything that he wanted since he first learned to cry for it! No, Santa Claus had promised them each a wish! What would the princes wish? Nobody knew. For though the Court Journal declared that of course their wishes would insure the happiness of their subjects, the Court Journal *knew* no more of the matter than you or I; and as all this happened before we were born, that is just nothing. Nevertheless, for weeks beforehand, the

entire court was in a state of preparation. The Duke of the Powder Closet powdered the comb wigs at such a rate that they were obliged to station a line of pages from the Powder closet to the pantry, who passed up refreshments continually to keep his strength up. The Queen wore her hair in curl-papers for a week, and spent the most of her time in the kitchen where the pies and plum-pudding were in making; and his Majesty grumbled that he could not stir without stumbling over a trumpeter, practising his bit of the Christmas chorus in a corner. For himself, the king ordered a new blue-velvet coat, and sent his crown and sceptre to be mended and rubbed up at a goldsmith's. All the pink pages had new green slippers. Ten of these pages were to help Santa Claus out of his sleigh and ten were to hold the reindeer; and all the time they were to sing a song of welcome, and to step all together. So they practised five hours a day with the Lord High Fiddlesticks; and the Lord High Fiddlestick bawled himself hoarse, while the pages lost flesh and temper in trying to learn.

What a pity, after all this pains, that Santa Claus left his reindeer behind him, and, slipping in just when nobody was looking for him, stood among them, not with his Christmas face, but looking sad and surly! "If you were my boys," said he gruffly, "catch me giving you a wish. I would shut you up in an iceberg first! However, a promise is a promise. Let us hear what you have to say."

All the courtiers stood on tiptoe, and you might have heard a pin drop, they were so anxious to know what the princes wished.

Pepin, though the youngest, being a saucy, spoiled boy, spoke first. "A prince should always have his own way," said Pepin. "Now there are a great many things that vex me. Sometimes, when I am flying my kite, there is no wind. Now I think that a prince should always be able to fly his kite: if not, I might as well be any other boy. In the same way, it rains when I am going to drive, and the sun sets before I am ready; and my ball will tumble down when I want it to stay up, and sometimes it is too warm, and sometimes it is too cold; in short, there is no end to my

annoyances, and I want to regulate these things myself."

Santa Claus looked hard at Pepin to see if he was quite in earnest. Pepin looked back at Santa Claus with a serious face. "Have your wish while you remain a prince," said Santa Claus.

The courtiers stared, but no one had time to make any remarks; for Prince Nutcracker, in a violent hurry lest Buttons should get ahead of him, wished for the luck-penny. Now you know whoever has a luck-penny will make money, more money, much money, and will never lose any.

"But there is one objection," remarked Santa Claus. "By continual use, the luck-penny by and by will look larger to you than anything else."

"That is nothing," said Nutcracker, slipping the luck-penny into his pocket.

Prince Buttons, blushing to the tips of his ears, wished "to marry the shoemaker's sweet daughter, and that the spirit of Christmas might live in their house the year round."

"Give us your hand!" cried Santa Claus,

pulling out the holly-sprig from his cap, and giving it to Buttons, but the King jumped up, fuming and spluttering: "You idiot! You ninny! The daughter of the shoemaker and the Christmas spirit, indeed. Christmas fiddlestick and fol-de-rol! Out of my sight!"

His Royal Highness was in such a rage that he actually lifted his royal foot to kick the prince. The Queen fainted; the courtiers cried, "Oh!" Prince Buttons ran away in the midst of the hubbub; Santa Claus disappeared; and, to make matters better, the court suddenly found itself in darkness. It was high noon, but the sun had popped out of the sky like a snuffed-out candle. Nobody could find candles or matches, and if the confusion was great in the palace, it was worse in the city. People were left standing in darkness at the shops and ferries and depots. People who were eating dinners, and people who were getting them, and people who had just come out to see Christmas, were all served alike. Everybody was in a fright; some screamed one thing and some another; and all the time there was nothing the matter, only Prince Pepin, who

was in a hurry to see the arch of Chinese lanterns, had ordered the sun to set.

"See here, Pepin," cried the King in a passion, "order the sun up again, and if I catch you doing such a thing——"

Pepin, who was afraid of his father, did not wait for the rest of the sentence; so, just as everybody had lighted candles, or turned on the gas, there was the sun again.

"Seems to me," said Pepin, sulkily, "I am not having my own way after all," and he went in a wretched humour to play battle-door and shuttlecock. He made bad strokes, and the shuttlecock tumbled on the ground. "Hateful thing, forever coming down!" cried Pepin.

"It only obeys the law of gravitation, my dear," said the Queen.

"I wish there was no law of gravitation," snapped Pepin.

Whisk! Pepin was flying through the air as if he had been shot from a gun. Kicking frantically, he saw the King, the Queen, everything, coming after him! Something hit him hard on the nose. He was in a perfect storm

of great round apples, flying in all directions! Bang! bump! on his head, in his mouth, on his shoulders! How he wished they had stayed in the market! Pepin dodged and squalled; the air was full of stones and timbers; a horse was kicking just over his head; somebody had him by the hair, and somebody else by the legs, for, of course, everybody clutched in all directions to save himself.

"Oh!" screamed Pepin amidst the general uproar of barking, neighing, braying, clucking and shouting, "I wish the law of gravitation was back again."

At once Pepin, the King, the Queen, and the people, were on their feet. Everything was in its accustomed place,—everybody a little rumpled, but nobody hurt. The King was disposed to be angry, but the Queen declared that Pepin was only a little thoughtless, the courtiers murmured, "Quite natural," and the Court Journal pronounced the affair the best joke of the season; but the people looked very glum over it.

That made no difference to Pepin, who con-

tinued his jokes very much at his ease. Often, when he was lazy, the sun did not rise until noon; and people might twist and turn in bed, or go about their business by candle-light, as they chose; when, on the contrary, he found his play amusing, he sometimes kept the sun in the sky till nine o'clock at night, while all the children in the city were crying for sleepiness. Three nations declared war on King Nutcracker, because Pepin sometimes ordered a dead calm for weeks, and sometimes had the winds blowing from all quarters at once, and navigation was quite impossible. The doctors were almost worn out, and the people died on all sides from constant violent changes of weather, for, if my young master got heated in his play, he made nothing of ordering the thermometer down to sixty degrees. The farmers were all in despair, for Pepin hardly allowed a drop of rain to fall; and having a fancy for skating in summer, he ruined what harvest there was by a week of ice and snow in July.

Remonstrance was quite useless, for Pepin was no longer afraid of his father, since he

could leave him at any time in total darkness. So one night there was heard a loud knocking at the palace gate, and, though the pages and the guards and the watchmen turned over on the other side, and tried very hard to go to sleep again, the knocking grew so loud that they were obliged to get up and see what was the matter. There was a mob at the gates; the people, tired of Pepin's jokes, had rebelled. Some ran one way and some another. Prince Nutcracker put his luck-penny in his pocket and walked out of the back door; no one stayed to look after the King and Queen, who were running about in nightcap and slippers, in a terrible fright; and if it had not been for Buttons, who, on the first alarm, ran to the palace, from which he had been kicked out six months before, they would have been in a sorry case, I think.

On the next day the Court Journal came out with a new heading. It was called now the People's Journal, and it said that, on the night before, old Mr. and Mrs. Nutcracker and their boy-Pepin had escaped, nobody knew how, and nobody cared; and that young

Mr. Nutcracker, the former heir to the throne, had opened a fine new store on Main Street.

So, you perceive, there was no longer a royal family.

As Nutcracker had the luck-penny, of course he made money in his new store. Every day, and all day long, he looked straight at the penny. At first he used to see other things; but as he took no notice of them, by and by the penny grew so large that it covered them all, and then he had no more trouble. He made money all the year round and he gave none of it away. None to Pepin, because he had brought about their misfortunes. None to Buttons, because he might have wished for something better, if he liked, than a holly-bush and the shoemaker's daughter. None to anybody, because why should not people work and earn money, as he had done, if they wanted it? And every day he grew more and more like his penny,—that is, of less and less use for anything that was not buying and selling. For Santa Claus, he had not seen him in ten years, till one Christmas eve, when hear-

ing a sudden jingling of sleigh-bells, he looked up and saw Santa Claus just coming down on the hearth-rug.

"I stopped my sleigh," said Santa Claus, "to see if you had anything to send your father and brothers."

Why should I send them anything?" answered Nutcracker, surlily.

Santa Claus put his hands down deep in his fur pockets, as if he was trying to hold himself. "What for! Aren't you rich and they poor? Your own flesh and blood? Confound it, man! if you have not the instinct of a son and a brother, you must feel the Christmas spirit at least once a year in your heart, urging you to love and kindness towards your fellow-men."

"Well, I don't, then," snarled Nutcracker. "Men need holidays to rest, I suppose, though I don't; but for Christmas being any better, or having anything more in it than any other day, I say, bosh! Give me plenty of money, and I can buy all the love and kindness I want! And if other folks want it, let them work and earn money as I do, and——"

Nutcracker never finished this speech, because—he could not. A singular dumb, dry and hard feeling had taken possession of him. His legs were gone. At least he could see them nowhere; so were his arms. Something wrapped him around. He had a strange notion that he had grown round, and that—it sounds ridiculous—but Nutcracker was quite positive that he was in a table drawer among some coin, and that he was—a copper penny.

By and by he heard a shrill voice, "Mr. Nutcracker, Mr. Nutcracker!" That was his wife. Then he heard his children calling, "Papa, papa!" Then a running up and down stairs. They were searching for him. Then somebody declared that he had disappeared, somebody else said that he must be advertised for, and, taking a handful of money from the drawer, Nutcracker among the rest, carried him to a newspaper office, and paid him in at a window for an advertisement about his own disappearance. Two minutes after, the man at the window gave him in change to a gentleman, who paid him out to a newsboy, who bought an apple with him of a grocer,

who gave him in change again to a shoemaker, who dropped him into his soiled and patched pocket, where Nutcracker found nothing else but a five-dollar gold piece.

This shoemaker was Buttons. Was not this a charming way for two brothers to meet?

The pocket into which Nutcracker dropped was a very poor pocket,—soiled and patched, as I said; but Nutcracker had not been in it five minutes when he felt—how shall I tell you? It is not easy to describe feelings, but this shoemaker, who walked in the biting wind with no overcoat and his hands in his pockets, had warmth and sparkle in his heart that made Nutcracker feel brighter, though he could not tell why. There were Christmas trees on all corners, and Christmas wreaths piled on the stands, and at every tree and wreath Buttons warmed more and more. There were women going home from market, with a broad grin on their faces, and a drum or a little bedstead on the top of the cranberries and turkey and Buttons laughed back at them as he walked, whistling and looking around him; and splendid ladies came smiling

out of the shops, and Buttons smiled at them; till between the signs of Christmas and the pleasant faces he got in such a glow that Nutcracker would hardly have said that he needed an overcoat.

All this time Buttons walked very fast and very straight till he came to a certain shop with a low door. Outside of this door was a clothes stand, and on this stand hung an overcoat, marked "Only Five Dollars."

Buttons stopped. "Now," said he to himself, "I need an overcoat. I have got five dollars in my pocket. Shall I buy this overcoat?"

Then Buttons imagined himself in the overcoat. His coat-tails would not fly out, and of course he could not put his hands in his pockets; and if not, where should he put them? Buttons took another look at the coat. It was certainly good for five dollars.

"But," said Buttons, "if I buy it they will have no Christmas dinner, and Ma Nutcracker has set her heart on chicken and pudding. My little wife will never know the difference between Christmas and any other day.

Poor Pepin, in his bed, will never know any difference. I shall come home in my brutal overcoat and that will be all."

Then he began checking off on his fingers like this: "A dressing-gown for father, a shawl for mother, a new gown for the little wife, goodies for the children, a box of paints for Pepin, and the dinner." Then he gave a little sigh, and, putting his hands again in his pockets, walked away as fast as he came. Do you suppose that he bought all these things with the five-dollar gold-piece? Nutcracker could not see, of course, but he thought not, for how could he?

Buttons lived upstairs, in a mean little house in a dirty street. His rooms were small, and they were crowded. There were old Mr. and Mrs. Nutcracker, who never forgot that they had been king and queen, and that Buttons' wife was a shoemaker's daughter, and never remembered that Buttons had returned their cruelty with kindness, and I think were not very nice people to live with. There was Pepin, who had been hurt, poor boy! in escaping from the palace, and who had never risen

since from his bed. There was Buttons' pleasant-faced wife; there were three fat children; there was the holly-bush, which had grown into a great tree; and there was—Nutcracker did not know what—but something, he was quite sure, for which he had been searching all his life.

The three fat children seized upon Buttons; one by each hand and one by his coat-tails.

"Ah!" said Buttons, pretending to groan. "I am so tired. Let the best child look outside of the door and see what he finds."

The best child opened the door cautiously, half afraid, and set up a shout. "Ma, come quick! here's a chicken, and cranberries, and a paper,—it's raisins!"

"Raisins!" screamed the other children.

"A chicken!" cried old Mrs. Nutcracker.

"Christmas wreaths!" exclaimed his wife, peeping out into the little dark hall. "Why, surely, you never——"

"Made them? Yes, I did," said Buttons, his eyes dancing. "In the woods. The cedars gave me boughs for nothing."

Christmas wreaths!" repeated Pepin from

his bed. "Give me one," and, seizing it in his thin fingers, "Ah! how nice it smells,—like the woods!" he said, laying his pale cheek on it. "I wish I could see a tree once more."

Buttons jumped up and ran downstairs very fast, and they heard him coming back dragging something after him, bump, bump! The something rustled and cracked and filled the room with a strong, spicy scent of the woods. Buttons lifted it so that it stood just in front of Pepin's bed. It was a spruce-tree. Its thick, strong branches spread out wide. Its top brushed the ceiling. Birds had built nests in its branches, mosses had lived about its roots. It knew all the secrets of the woods and the sky and the rains, and it told you about them, as well as it could, whenever you stirred its branches. The little wife hung the wreaths all about the room,—one on every nail, one over each window, one over Pepin, one each on the backs of grandpa's and grandma's chairs. It was getting dark, and the firelight came out and danced on the ceiling and on the white cover of the little table. Pepin lay looking at the tree. The children chattered

like little birds; even Grandpa and Grandma Nutcracker were smiling. The room was like a spicy cosy little nest. What was it, Nutcracker wondered more and more, here in these people's faces for which he had laboured all his life?

Suddenly Pepin cried out, "O, there is something here hanging on a branch of the tree!"

"Is it possible?" answered Buttons. "Then you had better take it down, Pepin."

Pepin took it down. "Why, it is for me," he said, looking at the name on the wrapper.

"Then you had better open it," answered Buttons in just the same tone as before.

Pepin untied the string, but his hands shook. "It is square," he said, feeling it. He took off one wrapper. "It is hard," he said again, trembling all over. He took off the second wrapper, and it nearly dropped from his fingers.

"A box of paints!" screamed the children, dancing around.

Pepin tried to speak, but he could not get out a word. He kissed the box, he laughed,

but you could see he was near crying. The little wife's eyes were full of tears also.

"Come! come!" said Buttons. "Do people cry over Christmas gifts?" There were no tears in his eyes. He was ready to dance, though now he would have no overcoat. As for Nutcracker, he had a curious tingling sensation all over him, though he was only a copper penny; and, happening to look towards the hearth, he saw Santa Claus. The old fellow had tied up his reindeer and slipped down the chimney, and was winking hard, and wiping his eyes, while pretending to blow his nose.

"I have it! I have got it, and know what it is!" cried Nutcracker, at the top of his lungs. "The Christmas spirit lives here all the year round, and these people love one another, and are happy. That is what I never had at home—happiness; that is what my money could not buy. That is why I was every day trying to make more money—always hoping to make money enough to buy it."

Should you not think that Buttons would have been very much frightened to hear such

a voice coming out of his pocket? No doubt he would, only, in some mysterious way, Nutcracker found himself on his legs again, and he was walking as fast as he could with a pocketful of money, to buy a monstrous turkey, and the best overcoat in the city, and boots and a hat to match, and a new gown, and a dressing-gown, and a shawl and a set of paints, and a great bouquet, and a basket of toys, and candies—for whom? Why, for Buttons, and Grandpa and Grandma Nutcracker, and the pleasant little wife, and Pepin, and the children, of course!

THE MAN OF SNOW

HARRIET MYRTLE

WHEN I was a little girl we lived entirely in the country for several years, and one winter there was a great fall of snow. The snow covered the roof of the house, the roofs of the stable and cow shed, and the branches of every tree were so thickly covered with the beautiful white snow that sometimes in the morning, when I looked out of the window, I could, at first, have fancied the trees were all apple and pear trees full of blossoms. You may, therefore, believe that the snow lay very deep in the fields.

We had three fields; one was adjoining our kitchen; and there was often a cow, or horse, or pony allowed to walk in it when the grass was good. This field sloped down into a sec-

ond which was parted off by a gate; and then by a pathway along the side of a high hedge, we came to a stile, and on the other side of the stile was our largest field. No cattle were allowed to enter this field, as the grass was kept for hay-making. Here, then, the deep snow lay all broad and white and soft, without the marks of a single footstep all over the whole bright expanse, where all was whiteness and silence.

Now there lived in a pretty lane very near us an old parish clerk named Downes. He lived in his cottage with his little granddaughter, and a blackbird. He was a tall, thin old man with straight white hair. His name was Godfred, but we always called him Gaffer Downes.

One morning during this great snow time Mr. Gaffer Downes came to my father and asked permission to make something curious in his large field. He explained what it was and had leave given him directly, for everybody was fond of Gaffer Downes. He had been parish clerk in our village for nearly forty years.

Away went Mr. Downes to get assistants for what he wished to do, and he soon found two who were willing to help him. One was the coachman of Squire Turner's family, who were neighbors and friends of ours; and the other was the parish sexton. Gaffer brought his spade with him; and the three went off together through the snow.

They took their way down into our great field, and there they each made a great snow ball. Following the directions of Gaffer Downes, these snow balls were rolled along until they collected more and more snow upon their sides all round, and, of course, began to get very large. Each man's snow ball was soon as large as his head. They went rolling on, and soon each of the snow balls was as large as two heads; then as large as a cow's head; then as large as a very great cow's head; and then each man was obliged to stop, as he could roll his snow ball along no more, it was so large and heavy. Mr. Downes then told the coachman and the sexton to leave their snow balls and come and help him to roll his. So all three pushed away, and rolled it nearly

all round the great field, by which time it was as large as the head of an elephant.

They stopped to rest and take breath. Mr. Downes now informed them that he wished this large ball to be rolled to the middle of the field, and to remain there while they rolled the others to the same size, and then brought them to the same spot. They were just beginning their work again when they heard a loud, merry laugh at the other side of the hedge, and whom should they see looking over and showing his white teeth and making a funny face at them but George Poole, the black footman at Squire Turner's.

"Aha!" said George, "Aha, Massa Down, me see you! how you do, Massa Gaffer Down? and how do you do? Is your pretty granddaughter at home? and how you do, you blackbird, Massa Down? aha! very fond of blackybird; he just my colour. How you do, you cold finger, Massa Gaffer Down—and Massa Sexton, and coachy man, too, with cold fingers, all so red, like scraped carrots?"

"George Poole," said Mr. Downes with a serious look, "George Poole, you interrupt.

Come and assist us, or return home to your fire in a quiet and proper manner, I beg of you."

"Me go home to proper fire," answered George, "but what you make there with great snow ball, Massa Down?"

"I do not intend to let any one know at present," answered Mr. Downes. "Good day, George," and as he said this he made a sign to the coachman and sexton, and they continued their work of rolling.

"Me come and see him when him finished," said George. "Good day, Massa Down," and as he said this the laughing black face of George Poole disappeared from the top of the hedge.

This work of rolling continued all the morning, and, as they found they had nothing else to do, they worked at it all the afternoon, also. By this time they had made seven balls of snow, each as large as the head of an elephant, and had rolled them all into the very middle of the field. But to do this they had been obliged to ask for the help of two men from our house. This my father readily

gave; indeed, I believe he himself helped at the last rolling of each ball, as they were so very heavy and moved so slowly. Mr. Downes then took the spade and patted every ball with the flat part of it, in order to make them even and hard, and so left them for the night.

The next morning while we were at breakfast Gaffer Downes passed by the window, with a spade over his shoulder, followed by the sexton and coachman each with a spade over his shoulder, and after them came the beadle, the church bell ringer, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ.

They all followed Mr. Downes into the large field.

Up we all jumped from the breakfast table and hurried on our things; papa, mamma and I, and Ellen Turner, who had heard of something that was to be done in our field, and had come over to breakfast with us to see. Away we all went, mamma carrying me where the snow was too deep, and papa carrying Ellen.

When we came into the large field, there we

saw them all busy indeed, working under the directions of Gaffer Downes, who was not working himself now, but standing still in the attitude of an artist, giving orders to his pupils. They soon made a sort of flat bank of snow, about a foot and a half high, and patted it down very hard with their spades. The pupils, that is to say, the coachman and sexton and bell ringer and beadle, and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ, then rolled three of the great balls of snow up on this bank, close to one another, so as to form a sort of circle, but leaving a hollow place in the middle of the form of a triangle, which the beadle remarked was very much the figure of the coachman's Sunday hat. Mr. Downes now came with his spade, and made this three-cornered hollow larger, in fact, large enough for a man to stand in very easily. He then desired the coachman and sexton to assist him with their spades in making the tops of these three balls quite flat. When this was done he directed them to make three more of the balls flat at top and bottom; this also being done, he called all his party together and told

them to lift these three balls, one at a time, and carefully place them upon the top of those three that were already placed, as I have told you. So the pupils did as they were directed and Mr. Downes made three notches, like steps, in the side of two of the balls, and up them he slowly walked with his spade, and again made the three-cornered hole in the middle of the three top snow balls, as large as he had made it in those at the bottom. We all thought he was going to get into it, but he did not. He only looked in. He now came down with a very important look, and went up to the one large ball of snow, which still lay there in its round shape. This he trimmed and patted all about into the form he wished, and then all the pupils were called to carry it and lift it by degrees and to place at the very top where it was intended to be made the head of the Man of Snow. It was a great job to get the head safely up, for it was very heavy. However, after much time and many narrow escapes of the head, and all the pupils tumbling down together, they did manage to get it to the top, just over

the hole which it covered up and its own weight kept it there safely.

It was now time to go to dinner. We all went but we finished as soon as we could and returned to the large field. Gaffer Downes, the coachman, and sexton moved round and round with their spades, cutting and shoving or patting up the snow to make the figure of a man. And as there were several hollow places where you could look into the inside, they filled them up with hard lumps of snow; all except one hole, which Mr. Downes said he wished left open to let the air in, though, on second thought, he said he would cover it over himself, and so he did, but very lightly. They made a few trenches and ridges down the middle and at the sides of the Man, and this they called his legs and arms, at which we all laughed. Lastly, Mr. Downes went climbing up the sides with his spade and went to work at the head. What he tried to do was to make a face to it, but it was very difficult. He cut out the nose and chin, very large and broad; but some unlucky cut just as he was finishing made them fall off. He then asked

the beadle to bring him two short sticks from the hedge; this being done, he stuck them into the face and covered them over with handfuls of snow, which he pressed and patted into the shape of a nose and chin. But when he had finished the weight of the snow made the sticks come out and down they fell. He went on trying again and again, and we all looked on and hoped he would succeed, though we laughed very much also for the nose fell off six times and the chin four. At last, however, with a sudden thought, which could only have occurred to one who had quite a genius for making a Man of Snow, Mr. Downes stuck the two short sticks in not pointing downwards or straight out, but pointing rather upwards, so that the weight of the nose and chin were supported upon the face and they held fast. And a very strange face it was!

Two things were still to be done. Mr. Downes drew from his coat pocket a couple of large round stones of a blue-grey color, and these he fixed in the face for eyes; and over the head, at each side, he stuck a number of small hedge twigs and a wreath from a thorny

wild rose tree, for hair. If more snow should fall he assured us the hair would look quite beautiful. Down came Mr. Gaffer Downes, looking so seriously and modestly upon the snow clumps on his shoes, while we all praised his work and told him how much we liked his Man of Snow.

It was now evening. We all went back through the fields and when we arrived at the house my papa sent out a quantity of hot ale, with sugar and toast in it, for the pupils, and we made Mr. Downes come in to tea with us though he wanted to go home. He said his little granddaughter and the blackbird would think he was lost in the snow.

There did happen to be a slight fall of snow again in the night and we all went down to the large field next morning after breakfast to see what change it had made in the appearance of the great Man. And a fine change, indeed, it had made. He looked much larger and rounder and whiter and colder and seemed more "at home" in the great white field. And he had a wonderful head of hair!

The very same evening as we were all sit-

ting round the fire, about an hour before supper time, Mr. Downes came to our house and sent in word that he had something very important to say. Mamma said, "Pray tell Mr. Downes to come directly." In came Gaffer Downes, looking rather paler than usual, and with his face looking longer than usual, and his white hair looking straighter than usual, and his chin sticking out with some frost upon it. He remained standing in the middle of the room without saying a word.

"What is the matter, Mr. Downes?" asked papa.

"Sir," said Mr. Downes, without moving from the place where he stood, "something has happened!"

"What has happened?" said papa, rising from his chair.

"An event!" said Mr. Downes.

"What event?" said mamma, rising from her chair, "and where has it happened?"

"In the large field," answered Mr. Gaffer Downes. "An event has happened to the Snow Man."

At this we all ran up to Gaffer Downes, ex-

claiming, "What has happened to him, tell us at once."

"The Snow Man," said Mr. Downes in a low voice, "The Snow Man talks."

"Talks?" cried we all.

"Yes," said he, "the Man speaks. He was addressing the field in a long speech when I passed on the other side of the hedge. It is a fine moonlight night. You can all come and hear him yourselves."

"That we will!" exclaimed my papa. "We will all go directly."

So mamma called for bonnets and shawls and handkerchiefs and cloaks and muffs, and tippets and gloves and fur boots and all sorts of things for there were several young ladies staying on a visit with us. And outside the door we found Squire Turner's coachman with the sexton and the beadle and bell ringer and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ; in fact, all Gaffer Downes' pupils, waiting to go with us into the large field.

Off we all set, Mr. Downes leading the way. At the end of the first field he made us all stop to listen. He asked us if any of us could

hear the Man of Snow speaking. We all listened and at last said, "No!" He then told us to follow him slowly along the hedge of the second field listening all the way. We heard nothing, and again Mr. Downes stopped us at the stile leading into the great field. Very attentively we listened, but all was as silent as possible.

Mr. Downes now told us we had better wait a little and let him go first, and as soon as the Man of Snow spoke he would return and tell us to come softly. So over the stile got Mr. Downes and we soon lost sight of him as he went creeping round closely by the hedge. Well, we waited and waited but Mr. Downes did not return. We listened but we could hear nothing. Still we waited but at last papa got out of patience and said, "What can have become of Mr. Downes?"

"I hope," said mamma, "nothing has happened to him."

"I am determined to go and see after him," said papa.

"Let us all go together," said mamma. "Let us all go together, straight up towards

the Man of Snow, and ask for Mr. Downes."

It was agreed upon and we all got over the stile and went crowding together along the field, nobody liking to go first, but all keeping close, like sheep when they do not know what to do for the best.

At last we came near the great Man of Snow. Papa and the young man who blew the bellows for the organ stood in front, and next to them came the sexton, and then mamma, with all us girls climbing close around her, wrapped up in our cloaks, with only our eyes and noses to be seen; and behind us stood the rest of the pupils—and behind all, at some distance, stood the beadle. Well, there we all stood in silence, in the great, silent snow field, looking at the great silent Man of Snow with the moon shining upon his head!

The young man who blew the bellows for the organ was the first who spoke; and he said in a very respectful voice, "I ask your pardon, sir; but could you be so kind as to tell us what has become of Mr. Downes?"

No answer was returned. Everything was as silent as before.

The sexton next spoke; and in a very humble tone he said, "May it please your Majesty! we have lost the clerk of the parish!"

Again we all remained in the same suspense and silence. The moon now went partly behind a cloud so that only a little pale light came across one side of the head and shoulders of the Man of Snow. At last papa was obliged to speak, and he said, "Oh, Man of Snow, we came not to disturb thy tranquillity, but if thy gracious whiteness hath once already spoken to these fields, permit us also to hear thy silent voice!"

There was again a pause and then, would you believe it?—you hardly can—would you believe it, the Man of Snow answered! He did, indeed. In a very slow and solemn voice he said, "Peace be upon ye all—and the silent thoughtfulness of these white fields."

You may suppose how fearful and astonished and quiet we all stood at hearing these words. Presently, however, my papa took courage, and again addressed the Man of Snow.

"Who art thou—and whence comest thou, oh, most serene Highness of the frost?"

"I am a spirit of Winter!" answered the Man of Snow, in the same solemn tone. "Once in Lapland I was one of the most renowned giants. There my image is built up with white stone, and because this likeness of me has been made, therefore, on the wings of the wind hath my spirit crossed the bleak seas to dwell for a little time in this body of snow. But now depart! I would be alone!—retire! To-morrow, at moon-rise, ye may come again."

We did not dare to disobey this command to depart, you may be sure; so we all went homewards, too full of thoughts to speak.

Just as we had reached the stile one of the young ladies cried out, "Oh, what's that under the hedge!" We all looked, and there we saw the head of a man rising out of the dry ditch by the side of the hedge! Who do you think it was? It was the poor beadle. He had been so frightened when the Man of Snow spoke that he had run back, but, being unable to get

over the stile, in his confusion, he got into the dry ditch and sat there upon the dead leaves and snow, with his chin just level with the top of the bank. However, the pupils soon lifted him out and comforted him and took him home. They also went to the cottage of Gaffer Downes to know if he had returned safely. But he had not returned.

Before we went to supper, however, we sent to the cottage, as we were getting very anxious; and his granddaughter answered from the window that her dear grandfather had returned and had a basin of warm broth and was now in bed.

We could hardly eat our supper, any of us, for talking of the Man of Snow and what he had said about having been once upon a time a Lapland giant! For my part I could not sleep for thinking of it, and all the young ladies said the same thing the next morning at breakfast.

You may be sure we were all very anxious for the evening to come when we were again to go and hear what the Man of Snow had to say. He told us, you recollect, to come

again at moon-rise; and the moon, papa said, would rise about seven o'clock.

We had a dinner party at our house and nearly all the time we talked of little else except the Man of Snow or rather what he had done when he was a giant in Lapland; and we thought that, perhaps, he might tell us the history of his life. We determined every one of us to go all together down to the great field when the moon rose.

As the time approached we became so anxious that we got ready too soon, and then, as we were all ready, we thought we might just as well go and wait there till the white giant chose to speak. So off we all set, and went very merrily, and yet not without some little fears, down toward the large field.

But when we had all got over the stile who should come running after us but Mr. Downes. He was quite out of breath, but as soon as he could speak he said, "Indeed, you are too soon. It's too soon by half an hour. You had much better get over the stile again and go into the other field a little while."

Now this made some of us laugh, for, do

you know, we now began to suspect that it was Mr. Downes himself who had spoken for the Man of Snow.

We thought perhaps he had got behind somewhere, or perhaps into the side of the great figure and thus spoken for him. But now, as we had come too soon he had no time to get ready. We were sorry for poor Gaffer Downes, yet still we could not help laughing at the scrape he was in. He went on assuring us the Man of Snow would not speak at all as we had come before the time he ordered. But this made us laugh the more, as we were now almost sure how it had been continued. Meantime, we had slowly advanced toward the Man of Snow, poor Mr. Downes telling us all the time that the Man would be sure not to utter a word as we had disobeyed his directions.

"But see," said papa, "the moon is now rising!"

"Aha! 'tis no matter now," answered Mr. Downes in a melancholy tone. "The Man of Snow will not speak a single word." Mr. Downes had scarcely said this when a voice

from the Man of Snow called out in a loud tone:

"How you do, Massa Down—how you lilly granddaughter do—and how you do you black bird, Massa Gaffer Downes?"

All burst into laughter except Mr. Downes, who walked backwards and forwards once or twice saying, "Dear me, how very vexatious!"

Papa and mamma now both went up to Mr. Downes and told him they saw how vexed he was at the change that had somehow or other taken place in the voice of the Man of Snow, because the spirit of the Lapland Giant had certainly flown away and quite a different one had gotten into its place. However, they begged him not to take it to heart, but to go and speak to the Man of Snow, and ask him to explain a little.

Mr. Downes thought for a minute, and then seeming to make up his mind to it, walked a few paces nearer to the Man of Snow, and this curious dialogue took place between them.

Mr. Downes: "Who art thou, oh, rude,

familiar voice, who has usurped the place of the frosty Spirit of last night?"

Man of Snow: "Me the King of Lapland! speaky more respectful to him Snow-ball Majesty, Massa Down!"

Mr. Downes: "No Majesty of Snow hast thou, nor art thou Lapland's king, nor ever wert, nor shalt be."

Man of Snow: "Why you say so you Massa Gaffer man! Me come from own country Lapland late last night after supper."

Mr. Downes: "What, then, for supper did the king of Lapland eat?"

Man of Snow: "Berry good supper to be sure—great supper in great big palace surrounded with orange trees and plantain and banana tree. Me have curried chicken plenty and hot rice with treacle, and a pineapple, and watermelon from own garden close by; and then me have chocolate, berry sweet. What you t'ink now, Massa Downes?"

Mr. Downes: "I think the King of Lapland dreams."

Man of Snow: "What he dream of then?"

Mr. Downes: "He dreams that he had

supper in some West Indian isle; for in Lapland no oranges, no pinies, no watermelons grow, no plantains, no banana."

Man of Snow: "Me never say they did grow there."

When the Man of Snow said this we all of us together cried out, "Oh! Oh!" meaning what a story he was telling.

Man of Snow: "Me never mean to say so. Me have great big hothouse, all glass, where fruit grow; and other t'ing me have brought over in fine large ship. Me very rich king; hab everything me wish."

Mr. Downes: "Rich, dost thou say, in money or in land?"

Man of Snow: "In money, to be sure. Me have large chest full of gold—Lapland gold and guineas, too—my friend and brother, the King of England, send me; and me have plenty land, too. Large fields of rice—no, not rice; rice not grow in Lapland—me know dat very well. Me mean to say, large plantation of sugar cane."

Mr. Downes: "Nor doth the sugar cane in Lapland grow."

Man of Snow: "Me know that very well—me just going to say so. But me try to make him grow; me try to bring new tings into my country; me try to get horses and oxen, and sheep, and deer, and dogs, and many bullfrogs, and rattlesnakes. Me want to change scorpions and mosquitoes into butterflies and lady-birds. Me want to have all manner of fine house for fine birds—parrots and macaws, with green wings and scarlet tails and blue breasts, and topknots; and peacocks and birds of paradise and a great pond of gold and silver fishes. And me mean to build great big bamboo house for all these, twice as high as my head."

As the Man of Snow said this, we all saw his head shake a little, as if he was in a great fuss with what he was thinking about doing; and we even thought we saw the upper part of the figure shake a little, and some pieces of snow began to crumble and fall. But he went on speaking again.

Man of Snow: "And me mean to have elephants and rhinoceroses and apes with long arms and blue noses. And me mean to build a house for elephants very large and very

strong; so that when we catch wild elephant, he no can get out. He try, and try—but he can't."

Here we all saw the Man of Snow shake again.

Man of Snow: "Makey house all sides very strong bamboo. See him angry-trunk poke through the bars of cage—but all too fast and strong. He no can get out. Then he make trumpet noise with trunk, and him lilly cunning eye look so very angry; and then he run him head right against the front of cage to try and push him down! but it is all too strong, and he can't—yet he push! and push!—and trumpet with trunk—and push! and, oh, Massa Down!"

As the Man of Snow uttered these words off rolled his head and broke into twenty pieces!—and the next instant the whole figure cracked, and opened in the middle and fell to pieces—and out rolled George Poole upon the snow, crying out: "Oh, Massa Down, why you no build him stronger?"

You may suppose how we all laughed. One of the young ladies almost went into a fit

of laughing and most of us laughed till we had a pain at both sides of the face, and yet we were unable to stop.

Even Mr. Downes laughed; not at first, though; at first he made a very long face, then he began, "te! he! he!"—and "he! he! he!" till at last he went into "ha! ha! ha! Oh, dear me!"—and was obliged to sit down upon the snow and wipe his forehead to recover himself.

We all returned to the house very merrily laughing all the way. We brought the King of Lapland with us, for George had always been a favourite in the village. So we told the cook to give his Majesty a large basin of rice, milk, and sugar, and mamma sent him afterwards a large slice of plum cake, and a tumbler with some sugar and lemons. Papa requested Mr. Downes to come in to supper with us, but he said that he really must go home, as his granddaughter and the blackbird would think something had happened to him. Papa, however, would take no denial, so we made Mr. Downes come in, and then we sent a man for his granddaughter with a mes-

sage that she was to bring the blackbird with her.

So, in a few minutes afterwards, in came a pretty little girl of ten years of age, with blue eyes and flaxen hair, and a complexion like a rose, bringing in her hand a large milk-white wicker cage with the blackbird sitting in the middle. He was as black as coal with a yellow bill, and oh! such a bright, black eye. He sat on his perch with his head bent on one side a little, then he jumped down to the bottom of the cage, and, poking his head between the bars, gave a look all round. He then hopped back into the middle of the cage, bowed very low and very quickly several times, and then hopped upon his perch with his tail toward us, but instantly whisked round, as if he was afraid somebody was going to touch his tail. Then he began to sing. He sang nearly all supper time, and flapped his black wings while we all stood up and drank the health of Mr. Gaffer Downes, the artist who had made the Man of Snow.

BUTTERWOPS

Edward Abbott Parry

Once upon a time there was a black beetle named Butterwops. He was very old, very wise, and had seen a great deal of the world. He had lived in a number of different houses, and was said to know more about the various qualities of sugar than a blue-bottle, and to understand the ways of men better than a cricket. Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that he became the leader of a small army of beetles, who called him "The General." He had a thick hoarse laugh, and could tell many tales, both fierce and merry, of battles he had fought against earwigs, cockroaches,

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and caterpillars. But for some time his laugh had not been heard, and he had been sad and melancholy, for his army were dying by the thousands, and if things went on in the way they were going, there would soon be not a single beetle left to listen to the tales of "The General."

The kitchen he lived in had plenty to eat in it, and was warm and comfortable, with lots of cracks in the walls and ceiling to live in during the day; but lately the master of the house had taken to spreading yellow powder over the floor and the young beetles would eat it, and it disagreed with them and they died. This yellow powder, so Butterwops told me, smelled deliciously of sugar and cheese and all the young beetles, being greedy, ate it up wherever they could find it. What happened to them after they tasted it was this: as soon as they had three mouthfuls, they felt a bad pain underneath their shell, turned over on their backs, kicked a little and died, and in the morning the cook swept them up and threw them into the garden. No wonder that Butterwops felt sad. He himself never tasted anything unless he

had seen another beetle try it first and had watched him walk about for quite five minutes. That is how he came to live to be old and became general; but he told nobody about that, keeping it a secret.

Butterwops had a great-grandson called little Jimmy. He was very lively and adventurous, and was always trotting across the floor in the daytime to frighten the cook; so it is a wonder he had lived as long as he had. He did not eat the yellow powder, for he was an obedient little beetle, and always did what Butterwops told him to do. As he ran about so much in the daytime he was generally the first to hear the news, and one day, about this time, he came to Butterwops and told him that the house on the other side of the street was rented, and he had seen some people moving into it while he was sitting on the window-sill in the gloaming on Thursday evening, which was the cook's night out.

"Fancy that!" said Butterwops. "Why I used to live in that house when I was a tiny little beetle just your size. It's a grand old house. Not a skirting board within half an inch of the floor, cracks in all the walls and

holes in the plaster. I wonder what sort of people are living in it."

"Newly married people," said little Jimmy, "whatever that may mean. I heard the cook say so, and the policeman told her about it."

"Ah!" said Butterwops, rubbing his hind legs together thoughtfully; "newly married people. They will do for us. They will have lots of sugar and leave it about, and then they will get some children to live with them, and the children won't eat fat and will make crumbs all over the floors; there will be lots to eat. We shall move."

That night "The General" called all the beetles round him after the cook had rolled the rug up and had gone to bed, and, sitting on the heel of one of the master's boots which were drying on the fender, explained to all the beetles that they must move across the road. "For," said he, "there is a newly married couple over the way. Now this kind of human being eats little else than sugar, and knows nothing of the ways of the world or the habits of the beetle. Their hearts are full of kindliness, and believing others to be

as good as they are, they leave the best food in the easiest places. So happy are they together, that they would not interfere with the happiness of others, even though they are black and wear shells. With them we may live for many years in health and comfort, whereas, here we die by tens and twenties every night. Arise, therefore, and follow me carefully and quickly. But when you are on the pavements in the road listen carefully for the tread of the policeman. If he comes among us while we are on the pavements he will kill many of us, for policemen have bigger feet than any other kind of men; only, luckily, they wear squeaky boots so that they may be heard coming a long way off. Now follow me and remember what I have said."

So speaking he crawled off the boot, down across the floor, under the scullery door, along the garden walk, across the pavements, in at the opposite gateway, round to the back door of the other house; and in half an hour Butterwops, little Jimmy, and two hundred and forty-nine of the beetles were safe in their new house, having crossed the road with the loss of only three beetles. Two tumbled down

a drain, and a third lost his way in trying to make a short cut across a flower bed.

They all set to work to get comfortable in their new quarters, and Butterwops, who liked to be near the fire, found a crack in the wall on top of the oven where they dried the wood. From this place of safety, he could come out and walk about among the warm wood and enjoy the heat, and yet run away on the first alarm.

"This is capital," he said, as he sat warming himself and watching twenty-five beetles climbing into the sugar basin at once; "this is peace and quiet, and here we shall be very happy."

As for the master of the old house they had lived in, he was very happy too, and wrote and told the man from whom he had bought the yellow powder: "Your powder has killed all the beetles in my house." And the man who sold the powder printed that in all the newspapers, and other people bought it; but it did not kill all their beetles, and that made them angry. Now if they read this story they will know how it really happened.

Although, as I have said, the house itself was very old, and suitable for beetles in every respect, yet all the things in the house were new, and perhaps the newest thing of all was the young servant, who seemed rather jealous of the other new things and often broke them. At present they had no cat, and as there was no one else to blame, the new mistress scolded the new servant, and then they both cried; especially if it happened, as it often did, that what was broken was a wedding present. However, the mistress was far too happy to be angry for long, and too proud of all the beautiful pots and pans in the kitchen, which she loved better than any of the lovely furniture in the drawing-room, to keep away from them for many hours. Besides, the young servant did not know much about anything, and the mistress used to help her to cook, and especially to get the master's tea ready when he came home. Indeed, in spite of the breakages, they were all very happy. The mistress used to go about the house singing brightly and cheerfully; while the young servant had

four lumps of sugar in her tea and a large slice of cake with it every night, so that she was quite happy, although singing was out of the question. As for the master, you had only to see him running up the house steps to see how glad he was to get home again after his day's work.

And dear old Butterwops! Why, it did his kind heart good to see so much happiness. The food was left about in easy places, and the larder door was always wide open so that you did not have to scrape your shell getting underneath it. It was a grand place for beetles, and Butterwops told them that if they kept quiet during the day and came out only at night, things would go well with them. Indeed, I have no doubt it would have been as he said, if they had only obeyed his instructions; but beetles, like children, sometimes forget to do what they are told.

Little Jimmy, for instance, was never happy unless he was frightening womenkind, and one afternoon three or four days after they had arrived, when the mistress and her servant

were getting tea ready, he scuttled across the room, helter-skelter, right under their eyes. The girl saw him first and threw the toasting fork on to the best tea-things, breaking two cups and saucers with it; she bounded on to a chair, pulled her skirts tight round her legs and screamed out, "Beetles! Black ones."

In a moment the mistress dropped the kettle, which nearly crushed little Jimmy, and jumped on to the table herself, screaming louder than the servant. Little Jimmy could hardly get under the skirting board, he was laughing so, and old Butterwops, looking out cautiously from the wood pile grunted to himself, "Little Jimmy again," for he knew who must have done it as soon as he heard the women screaming.

How long the two ladies might have stayed there screaming before they would have dared to step down on to the floor again I do not know, but the master of the house came in just then, and hearing the cause of the trouble laughed aloud and said. "If there are beetles, I will get a beetle trap." And he did so.

That night he brought one into the kitchen, and before they went to bed he and his wife mixed up a dose of treacle and sugar and put it in the trap and left the trap on the floor. Butterwops was looking on all the time from out of the wood pile, and he laughed all down the back of his shell at them. He had seen that kind of beetle trap before. It was a box of wood, with sloping sides to walk up and a sort of inkstand in the middle, leading to the sugar and treacle. When you walk up the sides, you smelled the mixture and if you went to the edge of the glass inkstand, you stepped in and got drowned. There was no getting out of it.

That night Butterwops was very anxious about the other beetles, for he knew what duffers they were, so he got down right away and sat on the edge of the trap and told them all about it. As the master of the house had been foolish enough to leave the sugar and treacle on the table, no one bothered about the trap. They had a merry feast, only spoilt by one giddy young beetle tumbling head first

into the treacle pot, and there the master found him when he came down to light the fire. When he found nothing in the trap, and the dead beetle in the treacle pot on the table, he seemed very angry and threw both treacle and trap out of the scullery window, across the garden into the ashpit.

"To-night," he said, "we will have a hedge-hog!"

Butterwops, who had stuck his head out of his crack to see what was going on, drew it back quickly and shuddered at this, for he knew what hedge-hogs were. His grandfather had been eaten by one in a garden close to the house, and he had heard they were terrible fellows for catching beetles, as indeed they are.

Sure enough, that night the master brought home a hedge-hog, a little prickly round ball in a basket. He unrolled himself by the fire and had a cup of milk.

"Let us call him Curlywig," said the mistress, as she poured out the milk; "he is such a little darling. See him drink."

So they called him Curlywig; but he paid no attention to them, and curled up on the rug and went to sleep.

That night Butterwops did not come down from the fireplace, but looked out from the wood pile in great trouble. When all his army of beetles were creeping and crawling over the floor, picking up food and having a rare good time, he kept shouting out from the edge of a log: "Do go home! Do go in! There's a hedge-hog in the corner."

But some of the beetles went close to Curlywig to look at him, and came back and said to Butterwops: "Nonsense, it's only a mop-head. You are growing old and nervous, General. Go to bed and let us eat in peace."

Almost as soon as they had spoken, Curlywig unrolled himself, and darting here and there and everywhere, went round the room cracking up beetles furiously while poor old Butterwops sat wringing his feelers and crying out from the wood pile: "I told you so! I told you so!"

From that time onwards, there was no

peace for beetles. If one put his head up above a crack in the floor, Curlywig was on to him and he was snapped up. In three days, one hundred and four beetles had been eaten, and the rest were all starving. Butterwops himself had not tasted bite or sup all the time, and you could hear little Jimmy crying behind the skirting-board that he had nothing to eat and was very hungry.

How long this might have gone on no one can say, but at last Butterwops hit on a bright idea, and the next night as soon as the people of the house were in bed, he came to the edge of the wood pile and said to the hedge-hog: "Mr. Curlywig, sir!"

Curlywig looked up, and seeing a beetle, snapped his jaws at him but said nothing.

"Mr. Curlywig, sir, can you explain to me why you are here?"

"To eat beetles, I suppose. What better job can you have? I'd eat you if you would come down, though you look rather old and tough, and there are lots of young ones left yet."

"Ah, but I sha'n't come down, thank you," said Butterwops, smiling blandly. "I suppose," he continued, as if he was merely thinking it out, "you don't know what it is like to be eaten, do you?"

"Not I," said Curlywig, "How should I?"

"No, of course not," said Butterwops. "Poor little fellow, how should he! It seems a cruel shame to bring him here for that. Poor little fellow!"

"Who is a poor little fellow?" asked Curlywig, rather angrily.

"That's what the mistress said, while you were asleep," said Butterwops, innocently, "as she was making the pie-crust. She said, 'Poor little fellow, I hope they won't hurt him skinning him!' "

Curlywig shivered in every prickle. "Who is to be skinned?" he snapped out, looking round nervously.

"The cookery book was open at Hedgehog Tart," went on Butterwops, quite coolly, as though he was talking about the weather, "and the servant said at the rate you were eating

beetles she thought you would be fat enough by to-morrow."

"Dear me! dear me!" said Curlywig; "what wicked things these men are. I remember now when the master of the house bought me, he said: 'Lean little beggar this, but he'll soon fatten up at our house for we are full of black beetles,' What wretches they are! What shall I do?"

"As far as I can learn," continued Butterwops, "it is done like this. You take a young hedge-hog, the fatter the better, first remove the prickles and skin quickly——"

"Do be quiet," groaned Curlywig, rolling himself up into a ball. "What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"That is to say," said Butterwops, "that is how it is done if they decide on tart. If it's to be curry you won't be skinned, only then you will catch it hotter in the saucepan."

"Shut up!" shouted Curlywig, running round the kitchen table in despair. "Oh my poor prickles! What shall I do?"

"Well, if I were you," continued the Gen-

eral, calmly, "I do not think I should stay on, but do not go on my account. You might squeeze under the scullery door if you wanted to, or you may stay and be eaten and I have no doubt you will look as handsome in a tart as you do out of it. But after all, handsome is as handsome does, and the real question is what will you taste like. Now you will never know, but I shall hear all about it. Yes," chuckled Buttercups, "I shall hear all about it."

Curlywig was now galloping round the room mad with terror, shouting out: "Oh, my poor prickles! Oh, my poor prickles!"

Butterwops continued slowly as though he was addressing a dear friend. "I am really very sorry for you, but don't worry so much. They are going to put some steak and kidney in the pie, so you will have company; and I dare say being baked is not bad, though I fear you won't like the skinning, especially this chilly weather. But it will soon be over, and once inside the oven you will be warm again in a jiffy."

Curlywig did not hear all this. He had heard enough. The foolish fellow believed every word Butterwops said to him, and when he came to the word skinning, Curlywig uttered a wild shriek and away he fled underneath the scullery door, across the garden, out into the fields beyond the church, where he hid in a dry ditch for three days, and dared not move out for fear the people of the house were hunting him.

Then the beetles had peace and grew up with the children who came to stay at that house, and cleaned up the floors, and kept out of sight as much as might be. Even little Jimmy grew wiser and gave up frightening the mistress. No one ever heard of Curlywig any more. And everyone in that house, from the master of it down to little Jimmy, lived happily ever afterwards.

This much more there is to tell: that if you can make friends with a black beetle you should get him to tell you stories of Butterwops. And this any good beetle will do willingly, for there never has been such a General

as he was before or since. But of all the many tales of his valour and wisdom, there is none they love to tell better than the story of how he outwitted Curlywig the Hedgehog. "That," as little Jimmy said at a dinner given by all the beetles to their General to celebrate Curlywig's flight, "is a story fit to be written in letters of Treacle on the Skirting Boards of Time." (Adapted.)

FINIKIN AND HIS GOLDEN PIPPINS

Madame De Chatelaine

In a quiet little village surrounded by woods, there once lived a poor couple who owned nothing in the world but their cottage which sheltered them and a bit of ground where a few vegetables grew. They were blessed with two pretty little twin boys, much alike in face, though very different in character. One was a tidy, diligent, active little fellow, whom, on account of his delicate beauty, his mother used to call Finikin. The other was an idle, careless child, who always loitered if sent on an errand, and grumbled when asked to do any kind of work. This one the mother called Winikin.

The father earned a little money by going out to work as a day labourer. As long as he

remained hale and hearty, he managed to provide for the wants of his family. But one summer he fell ill, and as they were too poor to buy good food and medicine he grew worse and worse, till at length his recovery seemed almost hopeless.

One day the patient wife thought of a good old hermit who lived in the neighboring forest, and who often gave advice to the poor cottagers. He had cured many a one with medicine made from plants and other homely remedies. She, therefore, called her boys and bade them go and ask the hermit what could be done for their sick father.

"The good man may send you to gather healing plants," she said, "such as he often points out to the villagers. Be sure to follow his directions carefully and above all, do not loiter on the way." She divided a rye-cake between them, to eat by the way, and off started the two boys for the forest. No sooner had they reached it than they saw from afar an old huntsman smoking his pipe under a tree.

"Oh!" cried Winikin, forgetting his mother's caution, "there is old Roger! Let's go to him instead of to the hermit. He always tells us such pleasant stories."

"But father is very sick and mother told us not to loiter on the way," said Finikin.

"Surely," said Winikin, "Roger's advice will be as good as the hermit's. I shall not go any farther."

So Finikin trudged on alone to the good old man's cell where he found him making medicine from herbs he had gathered in the forest.

"Good hermit," said Finikin eagerly, "will you not give me some of your medicine for my sick father?"

"I will, indeed," said the old man. "But my child there is something more than these herbs needed to cure your father; and it must be fetched from a long distance."

"I will go anywhere for it," declared Finikin, quickly.

"Then my son," replied the hermit, "you must go to a garden five or six miles off. None

but little children like yourself can enter; therefore, it would be of no use if I or any other grown person attempted to go with you. This garden is situated on top of a cluster of high rocks. Should you have the perseverance to reach it, you will find it full of trees, bearing all kinds of fruit which several little boys always keep gathering. You must ask them to give you some golden pippins for your father. If they consent all will be well; but if they try to keep you to play with them, you must not stay, for the hours would pass so quickly, that your father might die before you returned."

Finikin listened very carefully. "Please tell me the way to this wonderful garden," he said.

The hermit opened the door at the back of his cell, which led to a small piece of ground where he grew his vegetables. He showed Finikin a kind of tunnel hollowed out in a grotto through which he could see a distant view of green meadows and blue mountains, and told him that way would lead him

in the right direction. He then described carefully all the objects the lad was to pass on the road, and told him above all things neither to idle as he went along nor listen to anyone who should offer to show him a shorter way. Finikin promised he would not, and thanking the hermit, lost no time in starting off to find the wonderful garden where the golden pippins grew.

Winikin, meanwhile, after losing at least half an hour talking to the old huntsman, and playing with his dog, suddenly thought how heartless he had been, and asked Roger to tell what he had better do to help his father to get well.

"Do not stand idling here, youngster, for one thing," said Roger; "and next go and ask advice of the hermit, who knows better than anyone else what can be done to save your father!"

"Oh! but my brother has gone there, so it is of no use for me to go too," said Winikin; "and he is too far for me to catch him, so please tell me something else I can do instead!"

The huntsman thought awhile, and at last said: "I have heard of a wonderful garden some three miles east of the forest, where all kinds of fruits made of precious stones grow all the year round. The currants are rubies, the apples are topazes, and the plums are amethysts or sapphires. If you are able to reach this garden and gather a basketful of cherries you might enrich yourself and family for life; and then your father might have the best doctors. He would want for nothing and might soon get well."

Winikin was delighted at the idea of such a garden, and asked Roger to show him the way to it.

The old huntsman then took him to a kind of grotto that was so completely hidden by brushwood that the little boy had never seen it before though he had often crossed that part of the forest. When the twigs that choked up the entry had been put aside he saw a hollow passage and a view of distant meadows and hills. Then Roger carefully described all the objects the lad was to pass

on the road, so that he could not miss the way. Also, he bade him not to loiter on the way for fear he should not be back by nightfall.

Winikin now entered the grotto but kept stopping every minute to admire its pretty sparkling walls, which glistened like diamonds and rubies as a sunbeam shone through the narrow opening. At last, however, he came out into the open meadows, in a part of a country which he had never seen before. Here he met a beautiful little boy with golden locks and cheeks as blooming as a ripe peach. He was carrying a couple of hoops on his arm.

"Will you come and play with me?" asked the little stranger whose name was Goldlocks.

"Why," said Winikin slowly, thinking of the huntsman's advice not to loiter on the way, "I should like that very much, but I'm going to a beautiful garden beyond the hills and I'm afraid of being too late."

"Oh, don't fear that," said the little boy, "for we will trundle our hoops that way. You will get on much faster with a hoop than without one. Come!"

The lad offered Winikin one of the hoops which were made of finely worked silver. Also, there was a small ivory stick to trundle it with.

Winikin could not resist. He took a beautiful hoop and stick from Goldlocks who said: "Once, twice, thrice, away!" and off they went like the wind.

Winikin thought to reach the hills in about five minutes, but at a turn in the road little Goldlocks kept trundling on his hoop faster than before.

Winikin suspected they were not taking the shortest road to the hills, but fearing Goldlocks would win the game he sped after him as fast as he could.

At length Winikin stopped and was panting for breath. Goldlocks laughed and stopped, too, saying, "There's enough of hoop-trundling!" and he flung them over a hedge into a neighbouring field. "Now we'll stop and rest and play at marbles."

Then he drew from his pocket some pearls as large and round as other children's mar-

bles and Winikin, who dearly loved this game, could not resist playing.

"I have come along so fast," he said to himself, "that no time will be lost."

It was now high noon and the sun had grown so hot that Winikin felt tired and thirsty.

"Let us go into this wood and gather strawberries," said Goldlocks.

Winikin thought the idea was excellent, so he said, "Yes, we shall get on faster after we have eaten some fruit."

Accordingly, the little boys went into the wood, and, in about five minutes, Goldlocks had gathered enough strawberries to fill Winikin's hat. They were larger and more delicious than any he had ever tasted before.

When Winikin had eaten his fill, he wished to go on.

"Oh!" said his companion, "it is still too hot to walk fast. If you wait awhile under the shade of this pretty wood, you will get on all the better a little later in the afternoon."

"All right," said Winikin, and the lads sat

down on the grass. Goldlocks now drew from his pocket a humming top and set it spinning. It was made of a single carbuncle and was topped at each end with a diamond. It was called a humming top but it should have been called a musical top for the sounds it gave forth were as beautiful as an Eolian harp, and they formed distinct tunes. Winikin listened in speechless joy, till at length, tired out with play and amusement, he fell fast asleep.

Little Finikin, meanwhile, on getting out into the meadows, carefully noticed all the objects the hermit had described, so as to be sure to lose neither time nor way till at last he came to a field where he saw a little boy sitting on a bank, and crying bitterly.

Finikin felt so sorry for him that he stopped and said, "What is the matter?"

"Oh," cried he, "I am waiting for someone to play with. My name is Brownlocks. Who are you?"

"I am Finikin," said our little friend, "but I cannot stop to play. I am trying to find an

orchard of wonderful fruit. I shall take some of it back to my sick father. The fruit will help to cure him."

"Play with me awhile," said Brownlocks. "I can take you to a garden where you will find better fruit than that which grows in the orchard you are looking for."

But Finikin remembered the hermit's words and persisted in going on his way. When he looked to see if the little boy was following him, Finikin found he had disappeared.

Finikin hurried on, and at length the scenery began to grow wilder as he came near the end of his journey. The rocks were higher and more abrupt and the vegetation more luxuriant, and soon in great joy he stopped, looked at the top of a great pile of rocks, and cried out, "There is the wonderful garden! It looks like a giant basket of fruit and flowers! How shall I ever climb up to it!"

Finikin went round the base of the rocks and looked carefully to see if he could find a path leading to the summit. No such thing was to be found but he saw a cleft between two

rocks over which fell a cascade. The water had shrunk to a mere thread because the season had been very dry. Either the work of nature or the hand of man had formed rocks into rough steps, which were almost covered with a sheet of water. Finikin determined to climb the steps although they were slippery and dangerous. Slowly and carefully he made his way to the top where a hedge formed a circle round the garden. He crept through the prickly bushes and saw before him an earthly paradise. The grass was dotted over with every variety of rare, richly coloured flowers; the trees were loaded with fruit that shone like precious stones; the air was studded with the gayest butterflies; and birds with gold and silver plumage were hopping from branch to branch and trilling the sweetest songs.

Though Finikin was dazzled and charmed by all he saw, he walked on without stopping until he came to some little boys who were gathering plums.

"Who comes here?" said the boys on seeing

the little stranger. "And how did you get into our garden?"

"I come from the hermit in the forest," cried Finikin. "He said you could give me some pippins that would cure my father."

"Oh! if you come from the hermit you shall have some pippins," said one of the boys who was Brownlocks. "Only you must gather them yourself."

Then they led Finikin to another tree with a trunk as smooth and shining as glass. Golden pippins grew on the great branches at the top of the tree.

"Gather as many as you like," said the little boys.

Finikin then began to climb the tree. He kept slipping down every moment and, strange to say, the trunk kept growing higher and higher as if it would reach the sky.

Now it happened that Finikin had a lot of chalk in his pocket. By crumbling it to pieces in his hands he managed to grasp the tree trunk firmly and after many patient efforts he reached the top of the tree. He now

filled his hat and pockets with pippins that were as clear as topazes. The fruit was very heavy and when Finikin began to descend the tree his load of pippins was so heavy that it dragged him down faster and faster until he reached the ground. It was now twilight. The boys had picked up all their plums and had gone.

Finikin looked around in all directions, and finally, he discovered in the distance a gleam of light. He walked quickly up to it and found it came from a fruit storehouse of white marble. Here were silver filigree baskets filled with every kind of fruit and arranged neatly on shelves. All the fruit in the silver baskets was soft and eatable, while that in the golden baskets was turned to precious stones! The dark plums were sapphires and amethysts; the greengages and gooseberries, emeralds; the cherries, garnets; the whitehearts, rubies, dark on one side and almost white on the other; the black currants, black pearls. A number of beautiful empty baskets were hanging on gold and silver hooks.

Here Finikin found one of the boys, who wished him joy of his success, and after helping him to empty his pippins into a gold basket, the lad led Finikin down a flight of greenish marble steps into a beautiful hall which was lighted up with mother-of-pearl lamps hanging from the ceiling. Here in the center of the room supper was laid. The table was of citron-wood, and round the board were set cedar stools. On the walls countless toys of every description hung on golden hooks.

Finikin was so hungry after his day's work that he was glad enough to sit down and eat his supper.

When their meal was over Brownlocks said: "Now, Finikin, we will play some games."

But Finikin begged leave to go, as it was already late and he was afraid he could not reach home till the night was half spent.

"If you are afraid of being out in the night," said one of the little friends, "you may stay and sleep in the empty bed of one of our comrades who is absent; and to-morrow, at

sunrise, we will go with you a part of the way, and play together as we go along."

"I must not stay," said Finikin. "My father is very ill, dear friends, and I hope to reach home before it is too late."

"You shall do as you like," said the boys. Then one of them took down from the wall a stick with a nag's head.

"Take this toy with you," he said.

It was a very simple toy, but Finikin was delighted with the gift.

"It will carry you six times as fast as a horse, wherever you wish to go," cried the little boys.

Finikin clapped his hands for joy and said, "May I have a toy for Winikin, my brother?"

"No," they said, "Winikin must come himself for a toy. We cannot send him one."

Finikin thanked the lads and wished them good-night.

"Good-night, Finikin," they cried; "you may come to see us every Midsummer Eve on your nag. *He* will always find the way although you couldn't. Good-night!"

So Finikin left Magic Toyland. As soon as he was out-of-doors and had placed his basket of pippins on his arm he mounted his stick with the nag's head.

Away he started! He had scarcely time to wonder how he should manage to ride down the steep rocks. He seemed to be sinking deeper and deeper and without knowing how, he found himself in the long narrow passage leading to the hermit's garden.

All this time Winikin lay asleep in the woods. The sun was low in the western sky when he opened his eyes and saw Goldlocks sitting on the grass playing with a cup and ball.

"Lend me that plaything," said Winikin.

"No," said Goldlocks, "I have something which two of us can play with."

He pointed to a couple of golden drums covered with finest vellum that were lying in the grass. The drumsticks were of ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

"We'll play hide-and seek," he said. "I'll hide first and then I will beat my drum and

you must try to guess from the sound where I am."

"That will be good fun," said Winikin.

Goldlocks ran and hid himself. At the beating of the drum Winikin found him quite easily. Then Winikin hid but he had hardly struck the drum with his stick until there was Goldlocks! So they played for some time but at last Goldlocks hid himself so well that, though he kept beating his drum, Winikin could not find him. He ran to the right and to the left but it was of no use. The sound seemed to come from all directions at once. He tapped his own drum, and cried out, "Come back, Goldlocks! Where are you? Come back!"

He beat his drum so hard that it snapped! It was growing very dark! The brambles grew thicker at every step! The sound of Goldlocks' drum was growing fainter and fainter until at last Winikin could not hear it at all. He scratched his hands and tore his clothes at every step, but at last he found a path which led out of the thick wood.

He walked along until he came to a small lake; "Oh! what shall I do," he cried. "I've missed the way old Roger told me to take! Where shall I stay to-night!"

In a little while he saw Goldlocks with smiling face coming towards him. The lad carried a couple of battledores, covered with silver nets. The handles were of richly carved gold. He had a shuttlecock, too, which was made from the plumes of a humming-bird.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Goldlocks.

"Oh! I thought you had run away, and left me," cried Winikin. "And I've lost my way! I don't know what to do."

"Let's play a game of battledore," was Goldlocks' answer.

Winikin dried his tears and said, "Tell me where you get such pretty toys."

"I've plenty more at home, and prettier ones than these," replied his companion.

"I wish you would take me home with you," said Winikin. "Where do you live?"

"There across the lake," said the little boy, pointing to some distant hills.

The lads now played a game of battledore and kept tossing the shuttlecock higher and higher till at last it fell into the lake at a great distance, but remained floating on the surface.

"Let us jump in and see who will catch it first," said Goldlocks.

Away he darted into the water, and soon swam out of sight among the bulrushes that grew on an islet in the middle of the lake. Winikin believed he could swim, too, so into the water he jumped. In the dusk a white water-lily looked like the lost shuttlecock. Poor Winikin snatched at it, lost his balance, and fell down in the water. He tried to scream out to his companion, but he could not make a sound. After this he could not remember what took place.

Luckily the lake was not deep; he quickly rose to the surface and the gentle waves bore him to the shore where he lay insensible for several hours.

It was near daybreak when Winikin came to his senses again. He stared about wondering whether it was all a dream, or whether he had really played with Goldlocks the day before. Then he saw one of the battledores lying besides him and the lost shuttlecock.

"I had better stop here, or else he won't find me if he returns," thought Winikin.

He looked up and saw a little boy galloping along as fast as his wooden horse would carry him! It was Finikin!

The good little fellow had carried home his basket of fruit and had seen his father improve after eating one of the golden pippins. Then he had gone to find Roger, the huntsman, who said he had sent Winikin to the magical garden. Away went Finikin at full speed, like a small knight-errant, to seek his brother.

Of course Winikin was ashamed when he heard what his brother had done.

"I shall go to the wonderful garden and bring back a basket of cherries," he cried. "Perhaps they will give me a hobby-horse!

Nothing shall tempt me again to idle on the way. Will you not lend me your wooden nag, brother!"

"Yes, take it and hurry along," said Finikin.

"Gee-ho!" cried Winikin striding the stick. But the nag would not stir a bit faster than other sticks that children play with.

"Come!" said Finikin. "Get up behind me!"

Away went the little lads on the wooden horse. In a little while they came to the foot of the rocks, where Finikin left his brother. Then Finikin galloped home for the little boys had told him not to come again until Midsummer Eve.

When he was gone Winikin sat down and wondered how he should ever reach the garden. Perhaps the little boys would come out and help him. At least he would let them know where he was. He began to toss up the shuttlecock. Away it soared as if it had wings and lighted on a tree in the garden. At this moment a few red streaks were seen in the

sky and the little boys came out into the garden. One of them saw the shuttlecock!

"Who is there?" he cried.

"My name is Winikin. I am Finikin's twin brother," was the answer.

"What do you want" asked the boy in the garden.

"I want to see your pretty toys! and I want a basket of cherries," said Winikin.

The garden lads let down a basket and drew him up. There was Goldlocks as merry and mischievous looking as ever.

"You left me in the water, Goldlocks!" said Winikin to his playfellow.

"Yes, I had lost too much time to stay any longer," said Goldlocks. "Come, let us have breakfast."

They all sat down on the grass under the trees and feasted on strawberries and cream served in the finest porcelain bowls.

After breakfast Winikin said, "Now let us play."

"Oh! we must gather fruit first! There is work to be done. You had better gather your

basket of cherries," said one of the lads. "The cherry trees are over there. Gather a basketful from the one which stands in the middle." The lads then went about their work.

With his usual idle habits Winikin began plucking flowers and chasing butterflies. When his little friends came to fetch him to play games, they found he was not a jot farther than when they left him.

"We can't play with you, Winikin, until you have gathered your fruit," said Goldlocks.

And then he laid a golden trap-ball down on the grass, and the five little boys began to play merrily.

Winikin saw that he must work before he could join them at play so he began to climb the tree. What a long time it took him to reach the top. The fine cherries which were white-hearts were so ripe and juicy you may be sure he ate a good many of them. But at last he filled his pockets, descended the tree and lay down on the grass tired out with his work.

After a time the lads came to fetch him to

dinner. They first led him through the fruit-chamber where they helped him to empty his pockets into a silver filigree basket.

"Put all you have brought into the basket," said one of the lads; "for your cherries will harden into rubies in two or three days. Come now into the hall where dinner is ready."

Winikin could scarcely eat for looking at the toys in the magical hall. When the meal was over he asked leave to play with some of them.

The boys showed him a great many play-things he had never seen before but at last one of them said, "It is time to start, Winikin, if you wish to reach home before night."

"Won't you give me a little wooden nag like my brother's?" asked Winikin.

"We haven't another in our collection but you may have this toy," they answered giving him an agate cup and ball fastened to a delicate gold chain.

Winikin was well pleased with this toy and taking up his basket, he followed the little boys down a long, long flight of steps which

brought them to the bottom of the rocks where he saw a little crack just large enough for him to creep through.

"Do you see that large brown butterfly whose wings are tipped with dark blue?" asked Goldlocks. "Follow him. If you don't lose sight of him he will show you the way."

So Winikin started. The butterfly kept bobbing up and down, now lighting on this flower, and now on that. In fact Winikin could very easily keep up with him. But at a turn in the road a splendid butterfly rose out of a bush. Away darted Winikin after *him* although the lad noticed that the brown butterfly went in the opposite direction.

"I can soon catch up with old Browncoat again," thought Winikin.

Sunwings, the beautiful butterfly, led Winikin a fine dance over bank and bush, but at last the lad was obliged to give up the chase. He was a little surprised to find that he had lost some of his cherries in running after the golden butterfly.

"I'll go back and find old Browncoat," he

said to himself. "After all the loss of a few cherries does not matter much. How thirsty I am. A few cherries will refresh me."

So he sat down and ate several and then took out his cup and ball to amuse himself. After awhile he got up and again tried to find his way.

"How hungry and thirsty I am," he thought, taking one cherry after another from his basket until it was almost emptied.

After wandering about until twilight he found himself at the foot of the rocks on top of which was the magic garden. He tried to find the crevice through which he had crept out that morning but a foaming cascade was dashing down over it.

He shouted at the top of his voice, "I've lost my way, boys. Let me eat supper with you in the hall of toys and sleep here for the night."

"We have eaten supper," answered the boys; "but you shall have some. We can't let you stay all night for we have no spare bed."

They let down a basket and drew Winikin up as before and after taking him into the hall they went to bed. After he had eaten a hearty meal the boys called out to him to put out the lights and leave.

"But," said Winikin," how am I to get out of the garden?"

Goldlocks peeped out of his snowy bed and said, "There is a bat outside which will show you the way, and if you follow him better than you did the butterfly you will reach home in fairly good time."

Then Winikin put out the lamps in the sleeping-room, but before he put out the lights in the large hall he couldn't resist sauntering around once more to look at the toys. When he reached the door that led to the fruit-chamber he thought he might as well fill up his basket again, as a few cherries could not be missed from such a quantity. This he did. Then fearing the boys would chide him for his delay he began to put out the lights. Very foolishly he started with the one nearest the outer door, so that by the time he reached the

end of the long hall and put out the last lamp, he found himself in the dark.

Winikin was now so frightened that he didn't know what to do, for, if he tried to move in the dark he would be sure to overturn the table or the stools, so he cowered down in the corner hoping the boys would fall asleep and forget him, and that next morning he might escape before they were up. But presently he heard the boys get up very softly and come into the hall saying, "There's a thief here!" Winikin held his breath, and hoped to escape without notice; but they marched up to the corner where he lay hid just as if it had been broad daylight. Each had a rod in his hand and Winikin received a sound thrashing. At last he cried out, "It is only I. Don't hurt me!"

Then they stopped and dragged Winikin out of the hall. They emptied the basket of the cherries he had taken, which were easily distinguished from the others, as in his hurry he had helped himself out of a golden basket to some cherries that had hardened into rubies.

Then the lads fetched an ivory ladder of great length and putting it over the hedge they forced him to leave the garden at once.

Winikin cried bitterly when he saw the ladder taken up again but at last he began to think he had better make the best of a bad bargain. So he set off and, as Goldlocks had promised, a bat flew before him to show him the way.

For awhile he followed his leader carefully and made good resolutions as he went along, but alas! Suddenly a troop of fireflies flitted past him, and he said to himself, "How much better they would light me than this tiresome bat which keeps flapping his wings in my eyes! The fireflies are like so many lanterns and surely they'll know the way best." But they led him into a bog where he spent the night.

When morning dawned, he looked round for some hut where he could ask his way, but he recollected to his horror that neither yesterday nor the day before had he seen even a single being stirring anywhere. He saw that

he was within a charmed circle, and kept turning to no purpose. After toiling for some time he again recognized familiar objects, and the well-know garden in the distance. Winikin hardly dared again apply to the little boys, yet having eaten all the cherries to appease his hunger, and seeing no chance of freeing himself from his desperate position, he went to the rocks and clapped hands. Presently the boys appeared.

"Who dares to come a third time unbidden?" said they.

"Alas!" cried the foolish wanderer, "I have again lost my way, and eaten all the cherries. Please take pity and let me come up."

"No," said they, "you do not deserve to come into our garden any more; and as you are not to be trusted to go home, and we don't wish to be disturbed by you again, we shall now send you back."

So saying, they disappeared for a moment, and soon crept out at the foot of the rocks, bringing with them a go-cart, into which they put Winikin.

"All right," they cried out, and away it darted, at the speed which would shame an express train.

The go-cart, which was indeed worthy of its name, ran over hill and dale, rocks and water till Winikin thought every moment he would be dashed to pieces. At length it stopped when it reached his native village, before the door of a fine large farm house, and then, as if to make up for the lost time the moment Winikin had got out, it darted away again at double speed and went back to the magical garden.

"How is this?" said Winikin. "I don't see our cottage anywhere," And then he stopped a passer-by, and said to him: "Where do my parents live? For some reason I can't find the house!"

"Straight before your nose, you young idler," said the man.

At the same moment his mother appeared at the door of the farm house.

"Well, Winikin," she said, putting her arms around him, "you have been a long time, but

I suppose you have brought something worth the trouble."

It must be explained, that what had appeared three days to Winikin was, in fact, three weeks, for in that enchanted region a single day was equal in time to a week in the ordinary world. Finikin had escaped from this law, because he had returned before midnight, and consequently, had not spent a whole day away from home.

The mother then led Winikin into the house where he found Finikin and his father, who had quite recovered since he had eaten one of the golden pippins. All the rest of them had hardened into topazes, and had been sold by the parents to a rich jeweler in the nearest town. The money received had served to buy and stock the farm where they were living. The old cottage had been pulled down, and a barn was going to be built on its site.

"And now," said the father, "though you are too late, Winny, to do me any good, let us see what you have brought."

Winikin was very much ashamed to have

nothing to show but an empty basket nor did he improve matters by telling his parents that "there had been some very fine cherries in it." However, what was done could not now be mended, and the only thing left for Winikin was to try to improve.

For a long time after, whenever he went on a message, the villagers would say: "Don't be three weeks on the road, as when you went to fetch cherries for your sick father."

He was still further ashamed when midsummer came round again and his brother set off for the beautiful garden on his little nag, while Winikin had only a cup and ball, that gave him a rap on the head every time he played with it when he ought to have been doing something else!

After receiving many raps, however, he learned that he must not take out his toy except at the proper time.

As long as their childhood lasted Finikin continued to visit the little boys, but when he began to grow too big to play with them, they bade him affectionately farewell, and as

a parting gift they gave him branches of their apple-tree and cherry-tree. When these were grafted on two trees at the farmhouse they produced the finest fruit ever eaten. The cherries were the first white-hearts and the apples were ever since called golden pippins, on account of their origin. (Adapted.)

THE STORY OF FAIRYFOOT

FRANCES BROWNE

ONCE upon a time, there stood far away in the west country a town called Stumping-hame. It contained seven windmills, a royal palace, a market place, and a prison, with every other convenience befitting the capital of a kingdom. It stood in the midst of a great plain, which for three leagues round its walls was covered with corn, flax, and orchards. Beyond that lay a great circle of pasture land, and it was bounded on all sides by a forest so thick and old that no man in Stumping-hame knew its extent; and the opinion of the learned was, that it reached to the end of the world.

There were strong reasons for this opinion. First, that forest was known to be inhabited time out of mind by the fairies, and no hunter cared to go beyond its borders—so all the west

country believed it to be solidly full of old trees from end to end. Secondly, the people of Stumpinghame were no travellers—man, woman, and child had feet so large and heavy that it was by no means convenient to carry them far. Great feet had been the fashion there from time immemorial, and the higher the family the larger were their feet.

Stumpinghame had a king of its own, and his name was Stiffstep; his family was very ancient and large-footed. His subjects called him Lord of the World, and he made a speech to them every year concerning the grandeur of his mighty empire. His queen, Hammer-heel, was the greatest beauty in Stumping-hame. Her majesty's shoe was not much less than a fishing-boat. Their six children promised to be quite as handsome, and all went well with them till the birth of their seventh son.

For a long time nobody about the palace could understand what was the matter—the ladies-in-waiting looked so astonished, and the king so vexed; but at last it was whispered through the city that the queen's seventh child

had been born with such miserably small feet that they resembled nothing ever seen or heard of in Stumpinghame, except the feet of the fairies.

All the relations of the king and queen assembled at the palace to mourn with them over the singular misfortune. The whole court and most of the citizens helped in this mourning; but when it had lasted seven days they all found out it was of no use. So the relations went to their homes, and the people took to their work, and to cheer up the queen's spirits, the young prince was sent privately out to the pasture lands, to be nursed among the shepherds.

The chief man there was called Fleecefold, and his wife's name was Rough Ruddy. They lived in a snug cottage with their son Blackthorn and their daughter Brownberry, and were thought great people, because they kept the king's sheep. Moreover, Fleecefold's family were known to be ancient; and Rough Ruddy boasted that she had the largest feet in all the pastures. The shepherds held them

in high respect, and it grew still higher when the news spread that the king's seventh son had been sent to their cottage.

The king and queen had given him fourteen names, beginning with Augustus—such being the fashion in the royal family; but the honest country people could not remember so many, so they called him Fairyfoot. At court it was not thought polite to speak of him at all. They did not keep his birthday, and he was never sent for at Christmas, because the queen and her ladies could not bear the sight. Once a year the undermost scullion was sent to see how he did, with a bundle of his next brother's cast-off clothes; and, as the king grew old and cross, it was said he had thoughts of disowning him.

So Fairyfoot grew in Fleecefold's cottage. Perhaps the country air made him fair and rosy—for all agreed that he would have been a handsome boy but for his feet, with which nevertheless, he learned to walk, and in time to run and to jump, thereby amazing everybody, for such doings were not known among

the children of Stumpinghame. The news of court, however, travelled to the shepherds, and Fairyfoot was despised among them. The old people thought him unlucky; the children refused to play with him. Fleecefold was ashamed to have him in his cottage, but he durst not disobey the king's orders. Moreover, Blackthorn wore most of the clothes brought by the scullion. At last, Rough Ruddy found out that the sight of such horrid jumping would make her children vulgar; and, as soon as he was old enough she sent Fairyfoot every day to watch some sickly sheep that grazed on a wild, weedy pasture, near the forest.

Poor Fairyfoot was lying in the shadow of a mossy rock one warm summer's noon, with the sheep feeding round, when a robin, pursued by a great hawk, flew into the old velvet cap which lay on the ground beside him. Fairyfoot covered it up, and the hawk, frightened by his shout, flew away.

"Now you may go, poor robin!" he said, opening the cap; but instead of the bird, out

sprang a little man dressed in russet-brown, and looking as if he were a hundred years old. Fairyfoot could not speak for astonishment, but the little man said:

"Thank you for your shelter, and be sure I will do as much for you. Call on me if you are ever in trouble, my name is Robin Goodfellow;" and darting off he was out of sight in an instant.

For days the boy wondered who that little man could be, but he told nobody, for the little man's feet were as small as his own, and it was clear he would be no favorite in Stumpinghame. Fairyfoot kept the story to himself, and at last midsummer came. That evening was a feast among the shepherds. There were bonfires on the hills, and fun in the villages. But Fairyfoot sat alone beside his sheepfold, for the children of the village had refused to let him dance with them about the bonfire, and he had never felt so lonely in all his life. But remembering the little man, he plucked up spirit, and cried:

"Ho! Robin Goodfellow!"

"Here I am," said a shrill voice at his elbow; and there stood the little man himself.

"I am very lonely, and no one will play with me, because my feet are not large enough," said Fairyfoot.

"Come, then, and play with us," said the little man. "We lead the merriest lives in the world, and care for nobody's feet; but there are two things you must mind among us; first, do as you see the rest doing; and, secondly, never speak of anything you may hear or see."

"I will do that, and anything more you like," said Fairyfoot; and the little man, taking his hand, led him over the pasture into the forest, and along a mossy path among old trees wreathed with ivy, till they heard the sound of music, and came upon a meadow where the moon shone as bright as day, and all the flowers of the year—snowdrops, violets, primroses, and cowslips—bloomed together in the thick grass. There was a crowd of little men and women, some clad in russet colour, but far more in green, dancing round

a little well as clear as crystal. And under great rose-trees which grew here and there in the meadow, companies were sitting round low tables covered with cups of milk and dishes of honey. All the little people about the well cried:

Welcome, welcome!" and every one said: "Come and dance with me!" So Fairyfoot was as happy as a prince, and drank milk and ate honey till the moon was low in the sky, and then the little man took him by the hand, and never stopped nor stayed till he was at his own bed of straw in the cottage corner.

Next morning Fairyfoot was not tired for all his dancing. Nobody in the cottage had missed him, and he went out with the sheep as usual; but every night all that summer, when the shepherds were safe in bed, the little man came and took him away to dance in the forest.

The wonder was that he was never tired nor sleepy, as people are apt to be who dance all night; but before the summer was ended Fairyfoot found out the reason. One night,

when the moon was full, and the last of the ripe corn rustling in the fields, Robin Goodfellow came for him as usual, and away they went to the flowery green. The fun there was high, but never in all his life did Fairyfoot find such hard work as to keep pace with the company. Their feet seemed to move like lightning. Fairyfoot did his best, for he never gave in easily; but at length, his breath and strength being spent, the boy was glad to steal away and sit down behind a mossy oak, where his eyes closed for very weariness. When he awoke the dance was nearly over, but two little ladies clad in green talked close behind him.

"What a beautiful boy!" said one of them. "He is worthy to be a king's son. Only see what handsome feet he has!"

"Yes," said the other, with a laugh that sounded spiteful; "they are just like the feet Princess Maybloom had before she washed them in the Growing Well. Her father has sent far and wide throughout the whole country searching for a doctor to make them small

again, but nothing in this world can do it except the water on the Fair Fountain. And only the nightingales and I know where it is."

"One would not care to let the like be known," said the first little lady. "But you will surely send word to the sweet princess—she was so kind to our birds and butterflies, and danced so like one of ourselves!"

"Not I, indeed!" said the spiteful fairy. "Her old skinflint of a father cut down the cedar which I loved best in the whole forest, and made a chest of it to keep his money in; besides, I never liked the princess—everybody praised her so. But come, we shall be too late for the last dance."

When they were gone, Fairyfoot could sleep no more with astonishment. He did not wonder at the fairies admiring his feet, because their own were much the same; but it amazed him that Princess Maybloom's father should be troubled at hers growing large. Moreover, he wished to see that same princess and her country.

When Robin Goodfellow came to take him

home as usual he durst not let him know that he had overheard anything; but never was the boy so unwilling to get up as on that morning, and all day he was so weary that in the afternoon Fairyfoot fell asleep, with his head on a clump of rushes. But it so happened that towards evening the old shepherd, Fleecefold, thought he would see how things went on in the pastures. The shepherd had a bad temper and a thick staff, and no sooner did he catch sight of Fairyfoot sleeping, and his flock straying away, than he shouted all the ill names he could remember, and woke up the boy who jumped up and ran away. The shepherd ran after him as fast as his great feet would allow. Fairyfoot, seeing no other shelter from Fleecefold's fury, fled into the forest, and never stopped nor stayed till he reached the banks of a little stream.

Thinking it might lead him to the fairies' dancing ground, he followed that stream for many an hour, but it wound away into the heart of the forest flowing through dells, falling over mossy rocks, and at last leading Fairy-

foot, when he was tired and the night had fallen, to a grove of great rose-trees, with the moon shining on it as bright as day, and thousands of nightingales singing in the branches. In the midst of that grove was a clear spring, bordered with banks of lilies, and Fairyfoot sat down by it to rest himself and listen. The singing was so sweet he could have listened for ever, but as he sat the nightingales left off their songs, and began to talk together in the silence of the night.

"What boy is that?" said one on a branch above him. "He cannot have come from Stumpinghame with such small and handsome feet."

"No, I'll warrant you," said another, "he has come from the west country. How in the world did he find the way?"

"How simple you are!" said a third nightingale. "What had he to do but follow the ground-ivy, which grows over height and hollow, bank and bush, from the lowest gate of the king's kitchen-garden to the root of this rose-tree He looks a wise boy, and I hope he

will keep the secret, or we shall have all the west country here, dabbling in our fountain, and leaving us no rest to either talk or sing."

Fairyfoot listened in great astonishment, but when the talk ceased and the songs began, he thought it might be as well for him to follow the ground-ivy, and see the Princess Maybloom, not to speak of getting rid of Rough Ruddy, the sickly sheep, and the crusty old shepherd. It was a long journey; but he went on, eating wild berries by day, sleeping in the hollows of old trees by night, and never losing sight of the ground-ivy, which led him to a great city, and to a low old-fashioned gate of the king's kitchen-garden, which was thought too mean for the scullions, and had not been opened for seven years.

He climbed over, and walked through the garden, till a white fawn came frisking by, and he heard a soft voice saying sorrowfully:

"Come back, come back, my fawn! I cannot run and play with you now, my feet have grown so heavy"; and, looking round, he saw the loveliest young princess in the world,

dressed in snow-white, and wearing a wreath of roses on her golden hair; but walking slowly, as the great people did in Stumpinghame, for her feet were as large as the best of them.

After her came six young ladies, dressed in white and walking slowly, for they could not go before the princess; but Fairyfoot was amazed to see that their feet were as small as his own. At once he guessed that this must be the Princess Maybloom, and made her a bow, saying:

"Royal princess, I have heard of your trouble because your feet have grown large; in my country that's all the fashion. For seven years past I have been wondering to no purpose what would make mine grow. But I know of a certain fountain that will make yours smaller and finer than ever they were, if the king, your father, will give you leave to come with me. You may be accompanied by two of your maids that are the least given to talking, and the most prudent officer in all the king's household; for it would grievously

offend the fairies and the nightingales to make that fountain known."

When the princess heard this, she danced for joy in spite of her large feet, and she and her six maids brought Fairyfoot before the king and queen, where they sat in their palace hall, with all the courtiers paying their morning compliments. At first the king would not believe that there could be any use in this offer, because so many great physicians had failed to give any relief. The courtiers laughed Fairyfoot to scorn, and he wished himself safe in the forest again; but the queen said:

"I pray your majesty to notice what fine feet this boy has. There may be some truth in his story. For the sake of our only daughter, I will choose two maids who talk the least of all our train, and my chamberlain, who is the most discreet officer in our household. Let them go with the princess. Who knows but our sorrow may be lessened?"

After some persuasion the king consented, though all his councillors advised the con-

trary. So the two silent maids, the discreet chamberlain, and her fawn, which would not stay behind, were sent with the princess Maybloom, and they all set out after dinner. Fairyfoot had hard work guiding them along the track of the ground-ivy; but at last they reached the grove of rose-trees and the spring bordered with lilies.

The chamberlain washed—and though his hair had been grey and his face wrinkled, the young courtiers envied his beauty for years after. The maids washed—and from that day they were esteemed the fairest in all the palace. Lastly, the princess washed also—it could make her no fairer, but the moment her feet touched the water they grew less, and when she had washed and dried them three times, they were as small and finely shaped as Fairyfoot's own. There was great joy among them, but the boy said sorrowfully:

"Oh! if there had been a well in the world to make my feet large, my father and mother would not have cast me off, nor sent me to live among the shepherds."

"Cheer up!" said the Princess Maybloom. "If you want large feet, there is a well in this forest that will do it. Last summer time I came with my father and his foresters to see a great cedar cut down, of which he meant to make a money chest. While they were busy with the cedar, I saw a bramble branch covered with berries. Some were ripe and some were green, but it was the longest bramble that ever grew. For the sake of the berries, I went on and on to its root, which grew near a muddy-looking well, with banks of dark green moss, in the deepest part of the forest. The day was warm and dry, and my feet were sore with the rough ground, so I took off my scarlet shoes, and washed my feet in the well; but as I washed they grew larger every minute, and nothing could ever make them less again. I have seen the bramble this day; it is not far off, and as you have shown me the Fair Fountain, I will show you the Growing Well."

Up rose Fairyfoot and Princess Maybloom, and went together till they found the bramble,

and came to where its root grew, near the muddy-looking well, with banks of dark moss in the deepest dell of the forest. Fairyfoot sat down to wash, but at that minute he heard a sound of music, and knew it was the fairies going to their dancing ground.

"If my feet grow large," said the boy to himself, "how shall I dance with them?" So, rising quickly, he took the Princess Maybloom by the hand. The fawn followed them; the maids and the chamberlain followed it, and all followed the music through the forest. At last they came to the flowery green. Robin Goodfellow welcomed the company for Fairyfoot's sake, and they danced from sunset till the grey morning, and nobody was tired; but before the lark sang, Robin Goodfellow took them all safe home, as he used to take Fairyfoot.

There was great joy that day in the palace because Princess Maybloom's feet were made small again. The king gave Fairyfoot all manner of fine clothes and rich jewels; and when they heard his wonderful story, he and

the queen asked him to live with them and be their son. In process of time Fairyfoot and Princess Maybloom were married, and still live happily. When they go to visit at Stumpinghame, they always wash their feet in the Growing Well, lest the royal family might think them a disgrace, but when they come back, they make haste to the Fair Fountain; and the fairies and the nightingales are great friends to them, as well as the maids and the chamberlain, because they have told nobody about it, and there is peace and quiet yet in the grove of rose-trees. (Adapted.)

THE SNOW-QUEEN

Hans Christian Andersen

FIRST STORY

Which Treats of a Mirror and of the Splinters

Now, then, let us begin. When we are at the end of the story, we shall know more than we know now; but to begin:

Once upon a time there was a wicked Sprite, indeed, he was the most mischievous of all sprites. One day he was in a very good humour, for he had made a mirror with the power of causing all that was good and beautiful, when it was reflected therein, to look poor and mean; but that which was good for nothing and looked ugly, was shown magnified and increased in ugliness. In this mirror the

most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and the best persons were turned into frights, or appeared to stand on their heads; their faces were so distorted that they were not to be recognized; and if any one had a mole, you might be sure that it would be magnified and spread over both nose and mouth.

"That's glorious fun!" said the Sprite.

If a good thought passed through a man's mind, then a grin was seen in the mirror, and the Sprite laughed heartily at his clever discovery.

All the little sprites who went to his school —for he kept a sprite-school—told one another that a miracle had happened; and that now only, as they thought, it would be possible to see how the world really looked. They ran about with the mirror; and at last there was not a land or a person who was not represented distorted in the mirror. So then they thought they would fly up to the sky, and have a joke there. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more terribly it grinned; they could hardly hold it fast. Higher and higher still they flew,

nearer and nearer to the stars, when suddenly, the mirror shook so terribly with grinning that it flew out of their hands and fell to the earth, where it was dashed in a hundred million and more pieces. And now it worked much more evil than before; for some of these pieces were hardly so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about in a wide world, and when they got into people's eyes, there they stayed; and then people saw everything perverted, or only had an eye for that which was evil. This happened because the very smallest bit had the same power which the whole mirror had possessed. Some persons even got a splinter in their hearts, and then it made one shudder, for their hearts became like lumps of ice. Some of the broken pieces were so large that they were used for window-panes, through which one could not see one's friends. Other pieces were put in spectacles; and that was a sad affair when people put on their glasses to see well and rightly. Then the wicked Sprite laughed till he almost choked, for all this tickled his fancy. The fine splinters still flew

about in the air: and now we shall hear what happened next.

SECOND STORY

A Little Boy and a Little Girl

In a large town, where there are so many houses, and so many people, that there is no room left for everybody to have a little garden, and where, on this account, most persons are obliged to content themselves with flowers in pots, there lived two little children, who had a garden somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister; but they cared for each other as much as if they were. Their parents lived exactly opposite. They inhabited two garrets; and where the roof of the one house joined that of the other, and the gutter ran along the extreme end of it, there was to each house a small window: one needed only to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

The children's parents had large wooden boxes there, in which vegetables for the kitchen were planted, and little rosetrees, besides; there was a rose in each box, and they grew splendidly. They now thought of placing the boxes across the gutter, so that they nearly reached from one window to the other, and looked just like two walls of flowers. The tendrils of the peas hung down over the boxes, and the rosetrees shot up long branches, twined around the windows, and then bent toward each other: it was almost like a triumphal arch of foliage and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they must not creep over them; so they often obtained permission to get out of the windows to each other, and to sit on their little stools among the roses, where they could play delightfully. In winter there was an end of this pleasure. The windows were often frozen over; but then they heated copper farthings on the stove, and laid the hot farthings on the window-pane, and then they had a capital peep-hole, quite nicely rounded; and out of

each peeped a gentle, friendly eye—it was the little boy and the little girl who were looking out. His name was Kay, hers was Gerda. In summer, with one jump, they could get to each other; but in winter they were obliged first to go down the long stairs, and then up the long stairs again: and out-of-doors there was quite a snow-storm.

"It is the white bees that are swarming," said Kay's old grandmother.

"Do the white bees choose a queen?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the honey-bees always have one.

"Yes," said the grandmother, "she flies where the swarm hangs in the thickest clusters. She is the largest of all; and she can never remain quietly on the earth, but goes up again into the black clouds. Many a winter's night she flies through the streets of the town, and peeps in at the windows; and they then freeze in so wondrous a manner that they look like flowers."

"Yes, I have seen it," said both the children; and so they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow-Queen come in?" said the little girl.

"Only let her come in!" said the little boy; "then I'd put her on the stove, and she'd melt."

And then his grandmother patted his head, and told him other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home, and half undressed, he climbed upon the chair by the window, and peeped out of the little hole. A few snow-flakes were falling, and one, the largest of all, remained lying on the edge of a flower-pot. The flake of snow grew larger and larger; and, at last, it was like a young lady, dressed in the finest white gauze, made of a million little flakes, like stars. She was so beautiful and delicate, but she was of ice, of dazzling, sparkling ice; yet she lived; her eyes gazed fixedly, like two stars; but there was neither quiet nor repose in them. She nodded toward the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair; it seemed to him as if, at the same moment, a large bird flew past the window.

The next day it was a sharp frost; and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green leaves appeared, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their pretty garden, high up on the leads at the top of the house.

That summer the roses flowered in wondrous beauty. The little girl had learned a hymn, in which there was something about roses; and then she thought of her own flowers; and she sang the verse to the little boy, who then sang it with her:

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
The Christ-child is there the children to greet."

And the children held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up at the clear sunshine. What lovely summer days those were! How delightful to be out in the air, near the fresh rosebushes, that seemed as if they would never finish blossoming!

Kay and Gerda looked at the picture-book

full of beasts and of birds; and it was then—the clock in the church-tower was just striking five—that Kay said, "Oh, I feel such a sharp pain in my heart; and now something has flown into my eye!"

The little girl put her arms round his neck. He winked his eyes: now there was nothing to be seen.

"I think it is out now," said he; but it was not. It was just one of those pieces of glass from the magic mirror that had flown into his eye. Another piece had pierced his heart, where it soon became like ice. It did not hurt any longer, but there it was.

"What are you crying for?" asked he. "You look so ugly! There's nothing the matter with me. Ah!" said he at once, "that rose is cankered! and, look, this one is quite crooked! after all, these roses are very ugly! they are just like the box they are planted in!" And then he gave the box a good kick with his foot, and pulled both the roses up.

"What are you doing?" cried the little girl; and as he perceived her fright, he pulled up

another rose, got in at the window, and hastened away from dear little Gerda.

Afterwards, when she brought her picture-book, he asked, "What horrid beasts have you there?" And if his grandmother told him stories, he always interrupted her; besides, if he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and imitate her way of speaking: he copied all her ways, and then everybody laughed at him. He was soon able to imitate the gait and manner of every one in the street. Everything that was peculiar and displeasing in them,—that Kay knew how to imitate; and at such times all the people said, "The boy is certainly very clever!" But it was the glass he had in his eye; the glass that was sticking in his heart, which made him tease even little Gerda, whose whole soul was devoted to him.

His games now were quite different to what they had formerly been, they were so very knowing. One winter's day, when the flakes of snow were flying about, he spread the skirts of his blue coat, and caught the snow as it fell.

"Look through this glass, Gerda," said he. And every flake seemed larger, and appeared like a magnificent flower, or a beautiful star: it was splendid to look at!

"Look, how clever!" said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers! They are as exact as possible; there is not a fault in them, if only they did not melt!"

It was not long after this that Kay came one day with large gloves on, and his little sledge at his back, and called right into Gerda's ears, "I have permission to go out into the square, where the others are playing"; and off he was in a moment.

There, in the market-place, some of the boldest of the boys used to tie their sledges to the carts as they passed by. In this way they were pulled along, and got a good ride. It was capital sport! Just as they were in the very height of their amusement, a large sledge passed by: it was painted white, and there was some one in it wrapped up in a rough white mantle of fur, with a rough white fur cap on his head. The sledge drove round the square

twice, and Kay tied on his as quickly as he could, and off he drove with it. On they went quicker and quicker into the next street; and the person who drove turned round to Kay, and nodded to him in a friendly manner, just as if they knew each other. Every time he was going to untie his sledge the person nodded to him, and then Kay sat quiet; and so on they went till they came outside the gates of the town. Then the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see an arm's length before him, but still on he went; then suddenly, he let go the string he held in his hand in order to get loose from the sledge, but it was of no use; still the little vehicle rushed on with the quickness of the wind. He then cried as loud as he could, but no one heard him; the snow drifted and the sledge flew on, and sometimes it gave a jerk as though they were driving over hedges and ditches. He was quite frightened, and he tried to repeat the Lord's Prayer; but in spite of his efforts he was able only to remember the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, till

at last they looked just like great white fowls. Suddenly they flew on one side; the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove rose up. It was a lady. Her cloak and cap were of snow. She was tall, of slender figure, and of a dazzling whiteness. It was the Snow-Queen.

"We have travelled fast," said she; "but it is terribly cold. Come under my bearskin." And she put him in the sledge beside her, wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as though he were sinking in a snow-wreath.

"Are you still cold?" asked she; and then she kissed his forehead. Ah! it was colder than ice; it penetrated to his very heart, which was already almost a frozen lump; it seemed to him as if he were about to die,—but a moment more and it was quite congenial to him, and he did not notice the cold that was around him.

"My sledge! Do not forget my sledge!" It was the first thing he thought of. It was there, tied to one of the white chickens, who flew along with it on his back behind the large sledge. The Snow-Queen kissed Kay once

more, and then he forgot little Gerda, grandmother, and all whom he had left at his home.

"Now you shall have no more kisses," said she, "or else I should kiss you to death!"

Kay looked at her. She was very beautiful; a more clever or a more lovely countenance he could not fancy to himself; and she no longer appeared of ice as before, when she sat outside the window, and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect; he did not fear her at all, and told her that he could calculate in his head, and with fractions even; that he knew the number of square miles there were in the different countries, and how many inhabitants they contained; and she smiled while he spoke. It then seemed to him as if what he knew was not enough, and he looked upwards in the large, huge, empty space about him, and on she flew with him; flew high over the black clouds, while the storm moaned and whistled as though it were singing some old tune. On they flew over woods and lakes, over seas and many lands; and beneath them the chilling storm rushed fast, the wolves howled, the snow

crackled; above them flew large screaming crows, but higher up appeared the moon, quite large and bright; and it was on it that Kay gazed during the long, long winter's night, while by day he slept at the feet of the Snow-Queen.

THIRD STORY

Of the Flower-garden at the Old Woman's Who Understood Witchcraft

But what became of little Gerda when Kay did not return? Where could he be? Nobody knew. The boys said that they had seen him tie his sledge to another large and splendid one, which drove down the street and out of the town. But they did not know where he was. Many sad tears were shed, and little Gerda wept long and bitterly; at last she said he must be dead; that he had been drowned in the river which flowed close to the town. Oh, those were very long and dismal winter evenings!

At last spring came with its warm sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"That I don't believe," said the Sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone!" said she to the Swallows.

"That we don't believe," said they; and at last little Gerda did not think so any longer either.

"I'll put on my red shoes," said she one morning; "Kay has never seen them, and then I'll go down to the river and ask there."

It was quite early: she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went alone to the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow? I will make you a present of my red shoes if you will give him back to me."

And, as it seemed to her, the blue waves nodded in a strange manner; then she took off her red shoes, the most precious things she possessed, and threw them both into the river. But they fell close to the bank, and the little waves bore them immediately to land; it was

as if the stream would not take what was dearest to her; for in reality it had not taken little Kay: but Gerda thought that she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she clambered into a boat which lay among the rushes, went to the farthest end, and threw out the shoes. But the boat was not fastened, and the motion which she occasioned made it drift from the shore. She observed this, and hastened to get back; but before she could do so, the boat was more than a yard from the land, and was gliding quickly onward.

Little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; but they flew along the bank, and sang as if to comfort her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drifted with the stream, little Gerda sat quite still without shoes, for they were swimming behind the boat, but could not reach it, because it went much faster than they.

The banks on both sides were beautiful. There were lovely flowers, venerable trees, and

slopes with sheep and cows, but there was not a human being to be seen anywhere.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," said she; and then she grew less sad. She rose, and looked for many hours at the beautiful green banks. Presently, she sailed by a large cherry-orchard, where there was a little cottage with curious red and blue windows; it was thatched, and before it two wooden soldiers stood sentry, and presented arms when any one went past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive; but they, of course, did not answer. She came close to them, for the stream drifted the boat quite near the land.

Gerda called still louder and then an old woman leaning upon a crooked stick came out of the cottage. She had a large, broad-brimmed hat on, painted with the most splendid flowers.

"Poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you get upon the large, rapid river, to be driven about so in the wide world!" And then the old woman went into the water,

caught hold of the boat with her crooked stick, drew it to the bank, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, but she was rather afraid of the strange old woman.

"But come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," said she.

And Gerda told her all; and the old woman shook her head and said, "A-hem! a-hem!" and when Gerda had told her everything, and asked her if she had not seen little Kay, the woman answered that he had not passed there, but he no doubt would come; and she told her not to be cast down, but to taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were finer than any in a picture-book, for each could tell a whole story. She then took Gerda by the hand, led her into the little cottage, and locked the door.

The windows were very high up; the glass was red, blue, and green, and the sunlight shone through quite wondrously in all sorts of colours. On the table stood the most exquisite cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she chose,

for she had permission to do so. While she was eating, the old woman combed her hair with a golden comb, and her hair curled and shone with a lovely golden colour around that sweet little face, which was so round and so like a rose.

"I have often longed for such a dear little girl," said the old woman. "Now you shall see how well we agree together;" and while she combed little Gerda's hair, the child forgot her foster-brother Kay more and more, for the old woman understood magic; but she was no evil being, she only practised witchcraft a little for her own amusement, and she wished very much to keep little Gerda. She, therefore, went out into the garden, stretched out her crooked stick towards the rose bushes, which, beautifully as they were growing, all sank into the earth, and no one could tell where they had stood. The old woman feared that if Gerda should see the roses, she would then think of her own, would remember little Kay, and run away from her.

She now led Gerda into the flower-garden.

Oh, what odour and what loveliness was there! Every flower that one could think of, and of every season, stood there in fullest bloom; no picture-book could be gayer or more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun set behind the tall cherry-tree; she then had a pretty bed, with a red silken coverlet filled with blue violets. She fell asleep, and had as pleasant dreams as ever a queen on her wedding-day.

The next morning she went to play with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and thus passed away a day. Gerda knew every flower; and, numerous as they were, it still seemed to Gerda that one was wanting, though she did not know which. One day, while she was looking at the old woman's hat which was painted with flowers, the most beautiful of them all seemed to her to be a rose. The old woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made the others vanish in the earth. But so it is when one's thoughts are not collected. "What!" said Gerda, "are there no roses here?" and she ran about amongst the

flower-beds, and looked, and looked, but there was not one to be found. She then sat down and wept. Her hot tears fell just where a rose bush had sunk; and where her warm tears watered the ground, the rosebush shot up suddenly as fresh and blooming as when it had been swallowed up. Gerda kissed the roses, thought of her own dear roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

"Oh, how long I have stayed!" said the little girl. "I intended to look for Kay! Don't you know where he is?" asked she of the roses. "Do you think he is dead and gone?"

"Dead he certainly is not," said the roses. "We have been in the earth where all the dead are, but Kay is not there."

"Many thanks!" said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Don't you know where little Kay is?" But every flower stood in the sunshine, and dreamed its own fairy-tale or its own story; and they all told her very many things; but not one knew anything of Kay.

Then Gerda questioned the little snowdrop.

"Between the trees a long board is hanging—it is a swing. Two little girls are sitting in it, and are swinging themselves backward and forward: their frocks are as white as snow, and long green silk ribbons flutter from their bonnets. Their brother, who is older than they are, stands up in the swing; he twines his arms round the cords to hold himself fast, for in one hand he has a little cup, and in the other a clay pipe. He is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves. The little black dog, as light as a soap-bubble, jumps up on his hind legs to try to get into the swing. It moves, the dog falls down, barks, and is angry. They tease him; the bubble bursts! A swing—a bursting bubble—such is my song!"

"What you relate may be very pretty, but you tell it so sorrowfully, and you don't even mention little Kay."

Then Gerda went to the buttercups, that looked forth from among the shining green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun!" said Gerda.

"Tell me if you know where I can find my playfellow."

And the buttercups shone brightly, and looked again at Gerda. What song could they sing? It was one that said nothing about Kay either.

"In a small court the bright sun was shining in the first days of spring. The beams glided down the white walls of a neighbour's house, and close by the fresh yellow flowers were growing, shining like gold in the warm sunrays. An old grandmother was sitting in the air, with her granddaughter, the poor and lovely servant just come for a short visit. She knows her grandmother. There was gold, pure, virgin gold in that blessed kiss. There, that is our little story," said the buttercups.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she is longing for me, no doubt; she is sorrowing for me, as she did for little Kay. But I will soon come home, and then I will bring Kay with me. It is of no use asking the flowers; they know only their own old rhymes,

and can tell me nothing." And then off she ran to the further end of the garden.

The gate was locked, but she shook the rusted bolt till it was loosened, and the gate opened; and little Gerda ran off barefooted into the wide world. She looked round her thrice, but no one followed her. At last she could run no longer; she sat down on a large stone, and when she looked about her, she saw that the summer had passed; it was late in the autumn, but that one could not remark in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and where there were flowers the whole year round.

"Dear me, how long I have stayed!" said Gerda. "Autumn is come. I must not rest any longer." And she got up to continue her journey.

Oh, how tender and weary her little feet were! All around it looked so cold and raw; the long willow-leaves were quite yellow, and the fog dripped from them like water; one leaf fell after the other; the sloes only stood full of fruit which set one's teeth on edge. Oh,

how dark and comfortless it was in the dreary world!

FOURTH STORY

The Prince and Princess

Gerda was obliged to rest herself again, when, exactly opposite to her, a large raven came hopping over the white snow. He had long been looking at Gerda and shaking his head; and now he said, "Caw! caw! Good day! good day!" He could not say it better; but he felt a sympathy for the little girl, and asked her where she was going all alone. The world "alone" Gerda understood quite well, and felt how much was expressed by it; so she told the Raven her whole history, and asked if he had not seen Kay.

The Raven nodded very gravely, and said, "It may be—it may be!"

"What! do you really think so?" cried the little girl; and she nearly squeezed the Raven to death, so much did she kiss him.

"Gently, gently," said the Raven. "I think I know; I think that it may be little Kay. But now he has forgotten you for the Princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes,—listen," said the Raven; "but it will be difficult for me to speak your language. If you understand the Raven language, I can tell you better."

"No, I have not learnt it," said Gerda; "but my grandmother understands it. I wish I had learnt it."

"No matter," said the Raven; "I will tell you as well as I can; however, it will be bad enough." And then he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom where we now are there lives a princess who is extraordinarily clever; for she has read all the newspapers in the whole world, and has forgotten them again,—so clever is she. She was lately, it is said, sitting on her throne,—which is not so very amusing, after all,—when she began humming an old tune, and it was just 'Oh, why should I not be married?' 'That song is not without

its meaning," said she, and then she was determined to marry; but she would have a husband who knew how to give an answer when he was spoken to,—not one who looked only as if he were a great personage, for that is so tiresome. She then had all the ladies of the court drummed together; and when they heard her intention, all were well pleased, and said, 'We are quite glad to hear it; it is the very thing we were thinking of.' You may believe every word I say," said the Raven, "for I have a tame sweetheart that hops about in the palace quite free, and it was she who told me all this.

"The newspapers appeared forthwith with a border of hearts and the initials of the Princess; and therein you might read that every good-looking young man was at liberty to come to the palace and speak to the Princess; and he who spoke in such wise as showed he felt himself at home there, that one the Princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes—yes," said the Raven, "you may believe it; it is as true as I am sitting here. Peo-

ple came in crowds; there was a crush and a hurry, but no one was successful either on the first or second day. They could all talk well enough when they were out in the street; but as soon as they came inside the palace-gates, and saw the guard richly dressed in silver, and the lackeys in gold, on the staircase, and the large, illuminated saloons, then they were abashed; and when they stood before the throne on which the Princess was sitting, all they could do was to repeat the last word they had uttered, and to hear it again did not interest her very much. It was just as if the people within were under a charm, and had fallen into a trance till they came out again into the street; for then,—yes, then they could chatter enough. There was a whole row of them standing from the town-gates to the palace. I was there myself to look," said the Raven. "They grew hungry and thirsty: but from the palace they got nothing whatever, not even a glass of water. Some of the cleverest, it is true, had taken bread and butter with them; but none shared it with his neighbour, for each

thought, 'Let him look hungry, and then the Princess won't have him.' "

"But Kay—little Kay," said Gerda, "when did he come? Was he among the number?"

"Patience, patience; we are just come to him. It was on the third day, when a little personage, without horse or equipage, came marching right boldly up to the palace; his eyes shone like yours, he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very shabby."

"That was Kay," cried Gerda, with a voice of delight. "Oh, now I've found him!" and she clapped her hands for joy.

"He had a little knapsack at his back," said the Raven.

"No, that was certainly his sledge," said Gerda; "for when he went away he took his sledge with him."

"That may be," said the Raven; "I did not examine him so minutely: but I know from my tame sweetheart that when he came into the court-yard of the palace, and saw the body-guard in silver, the lackeys on the staircase, he was not the least abashed; he nodded, and said

to them, 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs; for my part, I shall go in.' All the rooms were ablaze with light; privy-councilors and excellencies were walking about barefoot, and bearing gold vases; it was enough to make anyone feel uncomfortable. His boots creaked, too, so loudly; but still he was not at all afraid."

"That's Kay, for certain," said Gerda. "I know he had on new boots; I have heard them creaking in grandmamma's room."

"Yes, they creaked," said the Raven. "And on he went boldly up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel. All the ladies of the court, with their attendants and attendants' attendants, and all the cavaliers, with their gentlemen and gentlemen's gentlemen, stood round; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. It was hardly possible to look at the gentlemen's gentleman, so very haughtily did he stand in the doorway."

"It must have been terrible," said little Gerda. "And did Kay get the Princess?"

"Were I not a Raven, I should have taken the Princess myself, although I am promised. It is said he spoke as well as I speak when I talk Raven language; this I learned from my tame sweetheart. He was bold and nicely behaved; he had not come to woo the Princess, but only to hear her wisdom. She pleased him, and he pleased her."

"Yes, yes; for certain that was Kay," said Gerda. "He was so clever; he could reckon fractions in his head. Oh, won't you take me to the palace?"

"That is very easily said," answered the Raven. "But how are we to manage it? I'll speak to my tame sweetheart about it; she must advise us; for so much I must tell you, such a little girl as you are will never get permission to enter."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Gerda; "when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out directly to fetch me."

"Wait for me here on these steps," said the Raven. He moved his head backward and forward, and flew away.

The evening was closing in when the Raven returned.

"Caw! caw!" said he. "She sends you her compliments; and here is a roll for you. She took it out of the kitchen, where there is bread enough. You are hungry, no doubt. It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for you are barefoot; the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it; but do not cry, you shall come in still. My sweetheart knows a little back stair that leads to the bedroom, and she knows where she can find the key."

And they went into the garden by the large avenue, where one leaf after another was falling; and when the lights in the palace had all gradually disappeared, the Raven led little Gerda to the back door, which stood half open. Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with longing! It was just as if she had been about to do something wrong; and yet she only wanted to know if little Kay was there. Yes, he must be there. She called to mind his intelligent eyes and his long hair so vividly, she could quite see him as he used to laugh when they

were sitting under the roses at home. "He will, no doubt, be glad to see you,—to hear what a long way you have come for his sake; to know how unhappy all at home were when he did not come back."

Her heart thrilled with fear and joy.

They were now on the stairs. A single lamp was burning there; and on the floor stood the tame Raven, turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who bowed as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My intended has told me so much good of you, my dear young lady," said the tame Raven. "Your tale is very affecting. If you will take the lamp, I will go before. We will go straight on, for we shall meet no one."

"I think there is somebody just behind us," said Gerda; and something rushed past: it was like shadowy figures on the wall; horses with flowing manes and thin legs, huntsmen, ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"They are only dreams," said the Raven. "They come to fetch the thoughts of the high personages to the chase: 'tis well, for now you

can look at them in their beds quite safely.

They now entered the first room, which was of rose-coloured satin, embroidered with flowers. Here the dreams were rushing past, but they hastened by so quickly that Gerda could not see the high personages. One hall was more magnificent than the other; and at last they came to a bedroom. The ceiling of the room was like a large palm-tree, with leaves of costly glass; and in the middle of the floor two beds shaped like lilies hung from thick, golden stems. One was white, and in this lay the Princess: the other was red, and it was there that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent back one of the red leaves, and saw a brown neck—Oh, that was Kay! She called him quite loud by name, held the lamp toward him, he awoke, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay!

The Prince was only like him about the neck; but he was young and handsome. And out of the white lily leaves the Princess peeped, too, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda cried and told her her whole

history, and all that the Ravens had done for her.

"Poor little thing!" said the Prince and the Princess. They praised the Ravens very much, and told them they were not at all angry with them, but they were not to do so again. However, they should have a reward.

"Will you fly about here at liberty," asked the Princess; "or would you like to have a fixed appointment as court ravens, with all the broken bits from the kitchen?"

And both the Ravens nodded, and begged for a fixed appointment; for they thought of their old age, and said, "It was a good thing to have a provision for their old days."

And the Prince got up and let Gerda sleep in his bed, and more than this he could not do. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How kind all are to me, people and animals as well," and she then fell asleep and slept soundly. All the dreams flew in again, and they now looked like the angels; they drew a little sledge, in which little Kay sat and nodded his head; but the whole was only a

dream, and therefore it all vanished as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. They offered to let her stay at the palace, and lead a happy life; but she begged to have a little carriage with a horse in front, and for a small pair of shoes: then, she said, she would again go forth in the wide world and look for Kay.

Shoes and a muff were given her; she was dressed very nicely, too; and when she was about to set off, a new carriage stopped before the door. It was of pure gold, and the arms of the Prince and Princess shone like a star upon it; the coachman, the footman, and the outriders, for outriders were there, too, all wore golden crowns. The Prince and the Princess assisted her into the carriage themselves, and wished her all success. The Raven of the woods, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles. He sat beside Gerda, for he could not bear riding backward. The other Raven stood in the doorway; and flapped her wings; she could not accom-

pany Gerda, because she suffered from headache since she had a fixed appointment and ate so much. The carriage was lined inside with sugar-plums, and in the seats were fruits and gingerbread.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried Prince and Princess; and Gerda wept, and the Raven wept. Thus passed the first three miles; and then the Raven bade her farewell, and this was the most painful separation of all. He perched upon a tree, and flapped his black wings as long as he could see the coach.

FIFTH STORY

The Little Robber-Maiden

Now Gerda was driven through a gloomy forest, but the coach shone like a torch, and it dazzled the eyes of some robbers who were in the woods so that they could not bear to look at it.

"'Tis gold! 'Tis gold!" cried they; and

they rushed forward, seized the horses, knocked down the little postilion, the coachman, and the servants, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"How plump, how beautiful she is! She must have been fed on nut-kernels," said an old robber-woman, who had a long, scrubby beard, and bushy eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. "She will taste as good as a fatted lamb!" And then she drew out a knife, the blade of which shone so that it was quite dreadful to behold.

"Let her alone," called out a little robber-child. "She will give me her muff, and her pretty frock; she shall sleep in my bed!"

"I will have a ride in her carriage," said the little robber-maiden. She would have her will, for she was very spoiled, and very headstrong. She and Gerda got in; and then away they drove over the stumps of felled trees, deeper and deeper into the woods. The little robber-maiden was as tall as Gerda, but stronger, broader-shouldered, and of dark complexion; her eyes were quite black. She

embraced little Gerda, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not displeased with you. You are, doubtless, a princess?"

"No," said little Gerda, who then related all that had happened to her, and how much she cared about little Kay.

The little robber-maiden looked at her with a serious air, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you: then I will do it myself;" and she dried Gerda's eyes, and put both her hands in the handsome muff, which was so soft and warm.

At length the carriage stopped. They were in the midst of the courtyard of a robber's castle. It was full of cracks from top to bottom; and out of the openings magpies and rooks were flying; and the great bulldogs, each of which looked as if he could swallow a man, jumped up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the midst of the large, old, smoking hall burnt a great fire on the stone floor. The smoke disappeared under the stones, and had

to seek its own egress. In an immense cauldron soup was boiling; and rabbits and hares were being roasted on a spit.

"You shall sleep with me to-night, with my little animals," said the little robber-maiden. They had something to eat and drink; and then went into a corner, where straw and carpets were lying. Beside them, on perches, sat nearly a hundred pigeons, all asleep, seemingly, but yet they moved a little when the robber-maiden came. "They are all mine," said she, at the same time seizing one that was next to her by the legs, and shaking it so that its wings fluttered.

"Kiss it!" cried the little girl, flapping the pigeon in Gerda's face. "There are a lot of them," continued she, pointing to a hole high up in the wall. "They would all fly away immediately, if they were not well fastened in. And here is my dear old Bac." She laid hold of the horns of a reindeer, that had a bright copper ring round its neck, and was tethered to the spot. "We are obliged to lock this fellow in, too, or he would make his escape.

Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp knife, which he is very much afraid of!" and the little girl drew forth a long knife from a crack in the wall, and let it glide gently across the reindeer's neck. The poor animal began to kick and the girl laughed, and pulled Gerda into bed with her."

"Do you intend to keep your knife while you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it rather fearfully.

"I always sleep with the knife," said the little robber-maiden: "there is no knowing what may happen. But tell me now, once more, all about little Kay; and why you have started off in the wide world alone." And Gerda related all, from the very beginning. The little robber-maiden wound her arm round Gerda's neck, held the knife in the other hand, and snored so loud that everybody could hear her. But Gerda could not close her eyes, not knowing whether she was to live or die. The robbers sat round the fire, and the old robber-woman jumped about so, that it was dreadful for Gerda to see her.

Then the wood-pigeons said, "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay! A white hen carries his sledge; he himself sat in the carriage of the Snow-Queen, which passed right over the forest as we lay in our nests. She blew upon us young ones, and all died except we two. Coo! coo!"

"What is that you say up there?" cried little Gerda. "Where did the Snow-Queen go to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She is no doubt gone to Lapland; for there are always snow and ice there. Only ask the Reindeer, who is tethered here."

"Aye, ice and snow indeed! There it is glorious and beautiful!" said the Reindeer. "One can spring about in the large, shining valleys! The Snow-Queen has her summer-tent there; but her fixed abode is high up towards the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."

"O Kay! poor little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Do you choose to be quiet?" said the robber-maiden. "If you don't, I shall make you."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said; and the little maiden looked very serious, but she nodded her head, and said, "That's no matter—that's no matter. Do you know where Lapland lies?" asked she of the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" said the animal; and his eyes rolled in his head. "I was born and bred there; there I leapt about on the fields of snow."

"Listen," said the robber-maiden to Gerda. "You see that the men are gone; but my mother is still here, and will remain. As soon as she sleeps a little I will do something for you." She now jumped out of bed, flew to her mother; and with her arms round her neck said, "Good-morning, you old stupid! good-morning." And her mother in return took hold of her nose, and pinched it till it was red and blue,—and all this was out of pure love.

When the mother had taken a sup, and was having a nap, the little robber-maiden went to the Reindeer, and said, "I should very much

like to give you still many a tickling with a sharp knife, for then you are so amusing; however, I will untether you, and help you out, so that you may get back to Lapland. But you must make good use of your legs; and take this little girl for me to the palace of the Snow-Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard, I suppose, all she said; for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer gave a bound for joy. The robber-maiden lifted up little Gerda, and took the precaution to bind her fast on the Reindeer's back; she even gave her a small cushion to sit on. "Here are your worsted leggins, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep for myself, for it is so very pretty. But I do not wish you to be cold. Here is a pair of lined gloves belonging to my mother; they will just reach up to your elbow."

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you fretting," said the little robber-maiden. "This is just the time when you ought to look pleased. Here are two loaves and a ham for you, so now you won't

starve." The bread and the meat were fastened to the Reindeer's back; the little maiden opened the door, called in all the dogs, and then with her knife cut the rope that fastened the animal, and said to him, "Now off with you; but take good care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the large, wadded gloves toward the robber-maiden, and said, "Farewell!" and the Reindeer flew on over bush and bramble, through the great wood, over moor and heath, as fast as he could go.

SIXTH STORY

The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman

Suddenly they stopped before a little house which looked very miserable: the roof reached to the ground; and the door was so low, that the family was obliged to creep on all fours when they went in or out. Nobody was at home except an old Lapland woman,

who was dressing fish by the light of an oil lamp. And the Reindeer told her the whole of Gerda's history, but first of all, his own; for that seemed to him of much greater importance. Gerda was so chilled that she could not speak.

"Poor thing," said the Lapland woman, "you have far to run still. You have more than a hundred miles to go before you get to Finland; there the Snow-Queen has her country-house, and burns blue lights every evening. I will give you a few words from me, which I will write on a dried fish, for paper I have none. This you can take with you to the Finland woman, and she will be able to give you more information than I can."

When Gerda had warmed herself, and had eaten and drunk, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried fish, begged Gerda to take care of them, put her on the Reindeer, bound her fast, and away sprang the animal. The most charming blue lights burned the whole night in the sky, and at last they came to Finland. They knocked at the chimney of

the Finland woman; for as to a door, she had none.

There was such a heat inside that the Finland woman herself went about almost naked. She was diminutive and dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's clothes, pulled off her thick gloves and boots; for otherwise the heat would have been too great; and after laying a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, read what was written on the fishskin. She read it three times; she then knew it by heart; so she put the fish into the cupboard—for it might very well be eaten, and she never threw anything away.

Then the Reindeer related his own story first, and afterwards that of little Gerda; and the Finland woman winked her eyes, but said nothing.

"You are so clever," said the Reindeer: "you can, I know, twist all the winds of the world together in a knot. If the seaman loosens one knot, then he has a good wind; if a second, then it blows pretty stiffly; if he undoes the third and fourth, then it rages so that the for-

ests are upturned. Will you give the little maiden a potion, that she may possess the strength of twelve men, and be able to conquer the Snow-Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" said the Finland woman; "much good that would be!" Then she went to a cupboard, and drew out a large skin rolled up. When she had unrolled it, strange characters were to be seen written thereon; and the Finland woman read at such a rate, that the perspiration trickled down her forehead. But the Reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked so imploringly with tearful eyes at the Finland woman, that she winked and drew the Reindeer aside into a corner, where they whispered together, while the animal got some fresh ice put on his head.

"'Tis true little Kay is at the Snow-Queen's and finds everything there quite to his taste; and he thinks it the very best place in the world: but the reason of that is, he has a splinter of glass in his eye and in his heart. These must be gotten out first; otherwise he will

never go back to mankind, and the Snow-Queen will always retain her power over him."

"But you can give little Gerda nothing to take which will endue her with power over the whole?"

"I can give her no more power than what she has already. Don't you see how great it is? Don't you see how men and animals are forced to serve her; how well she gets through the world barefooted? She must not hear of her power from us: that power lies in her heart, because she is a sweet and innocent child! If she cannot get to the Snow-Queen by herself, and rid little Kay of the glass, we cannot help her. Two miles hence the garden of the Snow-Queen begins; thither you may carry the little girl. Set her down by the large bush with red berries, standing in the snow; don't stay talking, but hasten back as fast as possible." And now the Finland woman placed little Gerda on the Reindeer's back, and off he ran with all imaginable speed.

"Oh! I have not got my boots! I have not

brought my gloves!" cried little Gerda. She remarked she was without them from the cutting frost; but the Reindeer dared not stand still; on he ran till he came to the great bush with the red berries; and there he set Gerda down, kissed her mouth, while large, bright tears flowed from the animal's eyes, and then back he went as fast as possible. There stood poor Gerda now, without shoes or gloves, in the very middle of dreadful, icy Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could. There then came a whole regiment of snowflakes, but they did not fall from above, and they were quite bright and shining from the Aurora Borealis. The flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda well remembered how large and strange the snowflakes appeared when she once saw them through a magnifying-glass; but now they were large and terrific in another manner—they were all alive. They were the outposts of of the Snow-Queen. They had the most wondrous shapes; some looked like large, ugly por-

cupines; others like snakes knotted together, with their heads sticking out; and others, again, like small, fat bears, with the hair standing on end: all were of dazzling whiteness—all were living snowflakes.

The cold was so intense that little Gerda could see her own breath, which came like smoke out of her mouth. It grew thicker and thicker, and took the form of little angels, that grew more and more when they touched the earth. All had helmets on their heads, and carried lances and shields in their hands. They increased in numbers; and soon Gerda was surrounded by a host of them. They pierced the frightful snowflakes with their spears, so that they flew into a thousand pieces; and little Gerda walked on bravely and in security. The angels patted her hands and feet; and then she felt the cold less, and went on quickly towards the palace of the Snow-Queen.

But now we shall see how Kay fared. He never thought of Gerda, and least of all that she was standing before the palace.

SEVENTH STORY

What Took Place in the Palace of the Snow-Queen, and What Happened Afterward

THE walls of the palace were of driving snow, and the windows and doors of cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls there, according as the snow was driven by the winds. The largest was many miles in extent; all were lighted up by the powerful Aurora Borealis, and all were large, empty, icy cold, and resplendent! Mirth never reigned there; there was never even a little ball for the bears, with the storm of music, while the polar bears went on their hind-legs and showed off their steps. Never a little tea-party of white young lady foxes; vast, cold, and empty were the halls of the Snow-Queen. The northern lights shone with such precision that one could tell exactly when they were at their highest or lowest degree of brightness. In the middle of the empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake; it was cracked in a

thousand pieces, but each piece was so like the other, that it seemed the work of a cunning artificer. In the middle of this lake sat the Snow-Queen when she was at home. But just now she had gone away in a far distant land.

Little Kay was quite blue, yes, nearly black, with cold; but he did not observe it, for she had kissed away all feeling of cold from his body, and his heart was a lump of ice. He was dragging along some pointed, flat pieces of ice, which he laid together in all possible ways, for he wanted to make something with them; just as we have little flat pieces of wood to make geometrical figures with, called the Chinese Puzzle. Kay made all sorts of figures, the most complicated, for it was an ice-puzzle for the understanding. In his eyes the figures were extraordinarily beautiful, and of the utmost importance; for the bit of glass which was in his eye caused this. He found whole figures which represented a written word; but he never could manage to represent just the word he wanted—that word was "Eternity";

and the Snow-Queen had said, "If you can discover that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will make you a present of the whole world and a pair of new skates." But he could not find it out.

"I am going now to the warm lands," said the Snow-Queen. "I must have a look down into the black cauldrons." It was the volcanoes Vesuvius and Etna that she meant. "I will just give them a coating of white, for that is as it ought to be; besides, it is good for the oranges and the grapes." And then away she flew, and Kay sat quite alone in the empty halls of ice that were miles long, and looked at the blocks of ice. There he sat quite benumbed and motionless; one would have imagined he was frozen to death.

Suddenly little Gerda stepped through the great portal into the palace. The gate was formed of cutting winds; but Gerda repeated her evening prayer, and the winds were laid as though they slept; and the little maiden entered the vast, empty, cold halls. There she beheld Kay: she recognized him, flew to em-

brace him, and cried out, her arms firmly holding him the while, "Kay, sweet little Kay! Have I then found you at last!"

But he sat quite still, benumbed and cold. Then little Gerda shed burning tears; and they fell on his bosom, they penetrated to his heart, they thawed the lumps of ice, and consumed the splinters of the looking-glass; he looked at her, and she sang the hymn:—

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
The Christ-child is there the children to greet."

Hereupon Kay burst into tears; he wept so much that the splinter rolled out of his eye, and he recognized her, and shouted, "Gerda, sweet little Gerda! where have you been so long? And where have I been?" He looked round him, "How cold it is here!" said he: "how empty and cold!" And he held fast by Gerda, who laughed and wept for joy. It was so beautiful, that even the blocks of ice danced about for joy; and when they were tired and

laid themselves down, they formed exactly the letters which the Snow-Queen had told him to find out; so now he was his own master, and he would have the whole world and a pair of new skates into the bargain.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they grew quite blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was again well and merry. The Snow-Queen might come back as soon as she liked; there stood his discharge written in resplendent masses of ice.

They took each other by the hands, and wandered forth out of the large hall; they talked of their old grandmother, and of the roses upon the roof; and wherever they went, the winds ceased raging, and the sun burst forth. And when they reached the bush with the red berries, they found the Reindeer waiting for them. He had brought another, a young one, with him, whose udder was filled with milk, which he gave to the little ones, and kissed their lips. They then carried Kay and Gerda, —first to the Finland woman, where they

warmed themselves in the warm room, and learned what they were to do on their journey home; and then they went to the Lapland woman, who made some new clothes for them and repaired their sledges.

The Reindeer and the young hind leaped along beside them, and accompanied them to the boundary of the country. Here the first vegetation peeped forth; here Kay and Gerda took leave of the Lapland woman. "Farewell! farewell!" said they all. And the first green buds appeared, the first little birds began to twitter; and out of the wood came, riding on a magnificent horse which Gerda knew (it was one of the leaders in the golden carriage), a young damsel with a bright red cap on her head, and armed with pistols. It was the little robber-maiden, who, tired of being at home, had determined to make a journey to the north; and afterwards in another direction, if that did not please her. She recognized Gerda immediately, and Gerda knew her, too. It was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow for tramping about,"

said she to little Kay; "I should like to know whether you deserve that one should run from one end of the world to the other for your sake!"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and inquired for the Prince and Princess.

"They are gone abroad," said the other.

"But the Raven?" asked little Gerda.

"Oh! the Raven is dead," answered she. "His tame sweetheart is a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg; she laments most piteously, but it's all mere talk and stuff! Now tell me what you've been doing, and how you managed to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay both told her their story.

And "Snip, snap, snorum!" said the robber-maiden; and she took the hands of each, and promised that if she should some day pass through the town where they lived, she would come and visit them; and then away she rode. Kay and Gerda took each other's hand: it was lovely spring weather, with abundance of flowers and of verdure. The chuch-bells rang,

and the children recognized the high towers, and the large town; it was that in which they dwelt. They entered, and hastened up to their grandmother's room, where everything was standing as formerly. The clock said, "Tick! tock!" and the finger moved round; but as they entered, they remarked that they were now grown up. The roses on the roof hung blooming in at the open window; there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down on them, holding each other by the hand; they both had forgotten the cold, empty splendour of the Snow-Queen, as though it had been a dream. The grandmother sat in the bright sunshine, and read aloud from the Bible: "Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

And Kay and Gerda looked in each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn:—

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
The Christ-child is there the children to greet."

There sat the two grown-up persons; grown up, and yet children; children at least in heart: and it was summer-time; summer, glorious summer!

A MERRY TALE OF THE KING AND THE COBBLER

IT WAS the custom of King Henry the Eighth to disguise himself and walk late in the night into the city of London, to observe how the constables, and watchmen performed their duty, not only in guarding the city gates, but also, in diligently watching the inner part of the city, to observe what went on in the streets. This he did oftimes returning home to Whitehall early in the morning without its being discovered who he was. Now, on returning home through the Strand he often took notice of a certain cobbler who was always up at work, whistling and singing every morning. So, resolving to see him, the king knocked off the heel of his shoe, by hitting it against a

stone. Having so done he bounced against the stall.

"Who is there?" cried the cobbler opening his stall door. The king asked him if he could fit on his heel.

"Yes, that I can," said the cobbler. "So sit thee down and I will do it for thee straightway."

The cobbler laid aside his awls and old shoes to make room for the king to sit by him. The king was hardly able to keep from laughing at the cobbler's manner. He then asked him, "Is there not a house near where I can get a cup of good ale, and the people up?"

"Yes," said the cobbler, "there is an inn over the way, where I think the folks are up, for carriers go from there very early every morning."

With that the king borrowed an old shoe of the cobbler and went with him over to the inn, desiring him to bring his shoe over there, as soon as he had mended it. The cobbler promised that he would; so making as much haste as he could, he carried it over to the

king saying, "Honest blade, here is thy shoe. I'll warrant thee, the heel will not come off again in haste."

"Well," said the king, "as thou art an honest, merry fellow, here is sixpence for thee. Come, sit down by me and I will drink with thee. Here's a good health to the king!"

"With all my heart," said the cobbler. "I will pledge thee that were it only in water."

So the cobbler sat down by the king and was very merry. He sang some of his merry songs and catches at which the king laughed heartily, and was very pleasant with the cobbler, telling him, withal, that his name was Harry Tudor and that he belonged to the court and that if the cobbler would come to see him there, he would make him very welcome because he was such a merry companion. He charged him to come and not forget his name, and to ask anyone about the court for him. "For," said the king, "I am well known there. They will bring you to me."

Now the cobbler little dreamed that it was the king that spoke to him, much less that

the king's name was Harry Tudor. Therefore, with a great deal of confidence, he stood up, and pulled off his hat and gave the king many thanks, telling him that he was one of the most honest fellows he had ever met in all his life, and that, though he had never been at court, it would not be long before he would make a holiday and come to see him. Whereupon the king, having discharged the reckoning for what he had had, would have taken leave, but the cobbler, taking the king by the hand said, "By my faith! thou shalt not go yet; thou shalt first go and see my poor habitation, for thou art the most honest blade I ever met, and I love an honest, merry companion with all my heart."

So the cobbler took the king with him, over the way, where he had a cellar adjoining his stall; which was handsomely furnished for a man of his calling. Into the cellar he led the king.

"There," said he, "sit thee down, thou art welcome; but I must desire thee to speak softly for fear of waking my wife, Joan, who

is in her bed nearby, for, if she should wake, she would certainly make our ears ring."

At this speech of the cobbler's the king laughed, and told him he would be mindful to follow his directions.

So the cobbler kindled a fire and fetched a brown loaf, from which he cut a large slice of bread. This he set before the fire. Then he brought forth a Cheshire cheese.

"Come," said he, "wilt thou eat some cheese? There's as much good fellowship in eating, as in drinking." This made the king admire the freedom of the cobbler. Having eaten a piece, the cobbler began, "Here's a health to all true hearts and merry companions," at which the king smilingly said, "I'll pledge thee, old friend, I'll pledge thee."

In this manner they ate and drank together, until almost break of day. The cobbler became very free with the king, pleasing the king with several of his old stories.

But suddenly, the cobbler's old wife, Joan, began to show signs of waking.

"In faith," said the cobbler, "you must be

gone now, for my wife, Joan, begins to grumble. She will wake presently and I would not, for all the shoes in my shop, that she should find thee here."

So taking the king upstairs he said, "Farewell, honest blade, it shall not be long before I make a holiday and come to see thee at court."

The king replied, "Thou shalt be kindly welcome."

So they parted, the king going on his way to Whitehall, and the cobbler back to his cellar where he put all things to rights before his wife, Joan, appeared. He went to work again whistling and singing as merry as he used to do, much satisfied that he had happened on such a good companion, and very much delighted at thinking of the merry time he would have when he went to court.

As soon as the king reached home, he gave orders to all about the court that if anyone inquired for him by the name of Harry Tudor, the person should be brought before him, without further examination.

To the cobbler every day seemed a month until he had been at court to see his new acquaintance. But he was much troubled how he should get leave of his wife, Joan. He could not go without her knowledge for he had resolved to make himself as fine as ever he could and his wife, Joan, always kept his holiday clothes. One evening as they sat at supper, she being in good humour, he began to lay open his mind to her and tell her the whole story of the acquaintance, repeating over and over again that Harry Tudor was the most honest man he had ever met.

"Husband," said Joan, "because you have been so generous as to tell me the truth, I shall give you leave to take a holiday. You shall go to court and I will make you as fine as possible."

So it was agreed that he might go the next day.

Joan arose the next morning to brush her husband's clothes and to make him look as snug as could be. She washed and ironed his lace band, and made his shoes shine,

till he could see his face in them. When this was done she made her husband arise and dressed him carefully in his best clothes.

The cobbler being thus equipped in his best strutted through the streets, like a crow, thinking himself very fine indeed. In this manner he came to court, staring at this person and that, as he walked up and down, and not knowing anyone to ask for but Harry Tudor. At last he spied one as he thought in the dress of a serving man. To him he made his address, saying, "Dost thou hear, honest fellow, dost thou know one Harry Tudor who belongs to the court?"

"Yes," said the man, "follow me; and I will take you to him."

With that he took him presently into the guard-chamber, telling one of the yeomen of the guard that here was a man who was inquiring for Harry Tudor.

The yeoman replied, "I know him very well, and if you please to go along with me, I will bring you to him immediately."

So the cobbler followed the yeoman much

admiring the finery of the rooms through which he passed and thinking within himself that the yeoman was not very unlike the person he inquired after. "He, whom I look for," said he, "is a plain, merry, honest fellow. His name is Harry Tudor. I suppose he may be some fine lord or other about the court."

"I tell you, friend," replied the yeoman, "I do not know him very well. Do but follow me and I will bring you to him straightway."

So they went on and soon reached the room where the king sat surrounded by many of his nobles. As soon as the yeoman had drawn aside the curtains he called out saying, "May it please your majesty, here is one that inquires for Harry Tudor."

The cobbler hearing this and thinking he had committed no less than treason took to his heels and ran for his life. But not being acquainted with the several turnings and rooms through which he had come, he was soon overtaken and brought before the king, whom the cobbler little thought to be the person he was inquiring for. He therefore, fell on his knees

saying, "May it please your Grace, I am a poor cobbler and inquired for one called Harry Tudor, who is a very honest fellow. I mended the heel of his shoe not long ago, for which he paid me nobly. I had him afterwards to my own cellar, where we were very merry, till my wife, Joan, began to wake, which put an end to our merriment, for that time. But I told him that I surely would come to court to see him, as soon as I conveniently could."

"Well," said the king, "rise up and be not afraid! Look well about you. Perhaps you may find the fellow in this company."

The cobbler arose and looked wistfully upon the king and his nobles, but to no purpose; for, although he thought he saw something in the king's face which he had seen before, yet, he could not imagine him to be Harry Tudor, the heel of whose shoe he had mended, and who had been so merry with him, both at the inn and in his own cellar.

He therefore told the king he did not expect to find Harry Tudor among such fine

folks as he saw there, but the person that he looked for was a plain, honest, true-hearted fellow, adding withal, that he was sure if Harry Tudor did but know that he had come to court he would make him welcome.

At this speech of the cobbler, the king had much to do to forbear laughing; but keeping his countenance as well as he could, he said to the yeoman of the guard, "Here, take this honest cobbler down into the cellar and I will give orders that Harry Tudor shall come to him presently."

So away went the cobbler ready to leap out of his skin for joy, not only that he had gotten off so well in his meeting with the king, but also that he should soon see his friend, Harry Tudor, again.

The cobbler had not been long in the cellar before the king came into him, in the same clothes he had on when the cobbler mended his shoe. The cobbler knew him immediately and ran to him and kissed him, saying, "Honest Harry, I have made a holiday on purpose to come and see you, but I had much to do

to get leave of my wife, Joan, who was loathe I should lose so much time from my work, but I was resolved to see you. So I made myself as fine as I could. But I'll tell you, Harry, when I came to court, I was in a pack of trouble how to find you out. At last I met a man who told me he knew you very well, and that he would bring me to you. But instead of doing so he brought me before the king, who has almost frightened me to death. But in good faith," continued the cobbler, "I am resolved to be merry with you, since I have the good fortune to find you at last."

"Ay, so you shall," replied the king, "we will be as merry as princes."

With that they drank together the king's health.

"Honest Harry, I will pledge thee with all my heart."

Now after the cobbler had made merry, he began to sing some of his old songs and catches. This pleased the king very much and made him laugh most heartily. All of a sudden a group of nobles came into the cellar richly

dressed. They stood with heads uncovered bowing before Harry Tudor. This amazed the cobbler very much but recovering himself he looked more closely upon Harry Tudor and presently he knew him to be the king whom he had seen in the Presence Chamber.

He immediately fell upon his knees, saying, "May it please your Majesty, I am an honest cobbler and meant no harm."

"No, no," said the king, "nor shall receive any here, I promise you."

He commanded the cobbler, therefore, to rise and be as merry as he was before; and though he knew him to be the king yet he should use the same freedom with him as he did when he mended his shoe. This kind speech of the king's put the cobbler in as good humour as he was before. He told the king many of his best stories and he sang more of his jolly songs, very much to the satisfaction of the king and his nobles.

Now the king, considering the pleasant humours of the cobbler, how innocently merry he was, and free from any design, and how

he laboured very hard, and took a great deal of pains for a small livelihood, was pleased, out of his princely face and favour to allot him a liberal annuity of forty marks a year for the better support of his jolly humours and the maintenance of himself and his wife Joan. The king ordered that he should be admitted as one of the courtiers.

This was so much beyond his highest expectations that it pleased him greatly, much to the satisfaction of the king.

So after some bows and scrapes, he returned to his wife, Joan, with the joyful news of his kind reception at court.

From GAMMER GURTON'S HISTORIE.

THE STORY OF MERRYMIND

Frances Browne

Once upon a time there lived in the north country a certain poor man and his wife, who had two corn-fields, three cows, five sheep, and thirteen children. Twelve of these children were called by names common in the north country—Hardhead, Stiffneck, Tightfingers, and the like; but when the thirteenth came to be named, either the poor man and his wife could remember no other name, or something in the child's look made them think it proper, for they called him Merrymind, which the neighbours thought a strange name, and very much above their station; however, as they showed no other signs of pride, the neighbours let that pass. Their thirteen children grew taller and stronger every year, and they had hard work to keep them in bread; but when

the youngest was old enough to look after his father's sheep, there happened the great fair, to which everybody in the north country went, because it came only once in seven years. It was held on midsummer-day, not in any town or village, but on a green plain, lying between a broad river and a high hill, where it was said the fairies used to dance in old and merry times.

Merchants and dealers of all sorts crowded to that fair from far and near. There was nothing known in the north country that could not be bought or sold in it, and neither old nor young were willing to go home without a fairing. The poor man who owned this large family could afford them little to spend in such ways; but as the fair happened only once in seven years, he would not show a poor spirit. Therefore, calling them about him, he opened the leathern bag in which his savings were stored, and gave every one of the thirteen a silver penny.

The boys and girls had never before owned so much pocket-money; and, wondering what

they should buy, they dressed themselves in their holiday clothes, and set out with their father and mother to the fair. When they came near the ground that midsummer morning, the stalls, heaped up with all manner of merchandise, from ginger-bread upwards, the tents for fun and feasting, the puppet-shows, the rope-dancers, and the crowd of neighbours and strangers, all in their best attire, made those simple people think their north country fair the finest sight in the world. The day wore away in seeing wonders, and in chatting with old friends. It was surprising how far silver pennies went in those days; but before evening twelve of the thirteen had got fairly rid of their money. One bought a pair of brass buckles, another a crimson riband, a third green garters; the father bought a tobacco-pipe, the mother a horn snuffbox—in short, all had provided themselves with fairings except Merrymind.

The cause of the silver penny remaining in his pocket was that he had set his heart upon a fiddle; and fiddles enough there were in the

fair—small and large, plain and painted: he looked at and priced most of them, but there was not one that came within the compass of a silver penny. His father and mother warned him to make haste with his purchase, for they must all go home at sunset. because the way was long.

The sun was getting low and red upon the hill; the fair was growing thin, for many dealers had packed up their stalls and departed; but there was a mossy hollow in the great hillside, to which the outskirts of the fair had reached, and Merrymind thought he would see what might be there. The first thing was a stall of fiddles, kept by a young merchant from a far country, who had many customers, his goods being fine and new; but hard by sat a little gray-haired man, at whom everybody had laughed that day, because he had nothing on his stall but one old dingy fiddle, and all its strings were broken. Nevertheless, the little man sat as stately, and cried, "Fiddles to sell!" as if he had the best stall in the fair.

"Buy a fiddle, my young master?" he said,

as Merrymind came forward. "You shall have it cheap: I ask but a silver penny for it; and if the strings were mended, its like would not be in the north country."

Merrymind thought this a great bargain. He was a handy boy, and could mend the strings while watching his father's sheep. So down went the silver penny on the little man's stall, and up went the fiddle under Merrymind's arm.

"Now, my young master," said the little man, "you see that we merchants have a deal to look after, and if you help me to bundle up my stall, I will tell you a wonderful piece of news about that fiddle."

Merrymind was good-natured and fond of news, so he helped him to tie up the loose boards and sticks that composed his stall with an old rope, and when they were hoisted on his back like a fagot, the little man said:

"About that fiddle, my young master: it is certain the strings can never be mended, nor made new, except by threads from the night-spinners, which, if you get, it will be a good

pennyworth," and up the hill he ran like a greyhound.

Merrymind thought that was queer news, but being given to hope the best, he believed the little man was only jesting, and made haste to join the rest of the family, who were soon on their way home. When they got there everyone showed his bargain, and Merrymind showed his fiddle; but his brothers and sisters laughed at him for buying such a thing when he had never learned to play. His sisters asked him what music he could bring out of broken strings; and his father said:

"Thou hast shown little prudence in laying out thy first penny, from which token I fear thou wilt never have many to lay out."

In short, everybody threw scorn on Merrymind's bargain except his mother. She, good woman, said if he laid out one penny ill, he might lay out the next better; and who knew but his fiddle would be of use some day? To make her words good, Merrymind fell to repairing the strings—he spent all his time, both night and day, upon them; but, true to the little man's parting words, no mending would

stand, and no string would hold on that fiddle. Merrymind tried everything, and wearied himself to no purpose. At last he thought of inquiring after people who spun at night; and this seemed such a good joke to the north country people that they wanted no other till the next fair.

In the meantime, Merrymind lost credit at home and abroad. Everybody believed in his father's prophecy; his brothers and sisters valued him no more than a herd-boy; the neighbours thought he must turn out a scape-grace. Still the boy would not part with his fiddle. It was his silver pennyworth, and he had a strong hope of mending the strings for all that had come and gone; but since nobody at home cared for him except his mother, and as she had twelve other children, he resolved to leave the scorn behind him, and go to seek his fortune.

The family were not very sorry to hear of that intention, being in a manner ashamed of him; besides, they could spare one out of thirteen. His father gave him a barley cake, and his mother her blessing. All his brothers

and sisters wished him well. Most of the neighbours hoped that no harm would happen to him; and Merrymind set out one summer morning with the broken-stringed fiddle under his arm.

There were no highways then in the north country—people took whatever path pleased them best; so Merrymind went over the fair ground and up the hill, hoping to meet the little man, and learn something of the night-spinners. The hill was covered with heather to the top, and he went up without meeting anyone. On the other side it was steep and rocky, and after a hard scramble down, he came to a narrow glen all overgrown with wild furze and brambles. Merrymind had never met with briars so sharp, but he was not the boy to turn back readily, and pressed on in spite of torn clothes and scratched hands, till he came to the end of the glen, where two paths met: one of them wound through a pinewood, he knew not how far, but it seemed green and pleasant. The other was a rough, stony way leading to a wide valley surrounded

by high hills, and overhung by a dull, thick mist, though it was yet early in the summer evening.

Merrymind was weary with his long journey, and stood thinking of what path to choose, when, by the way of the valley, there came an old man as tall and large as any three men of the north country. His white hair and beard hung like tangled flax about him! his clothes were made of sackcloth; and on his back he carried a heavy burden of dust heaped high in a great pannier.

"Listen to me, you lazy vagabond!" he said, coming near to Merrymind. "If you take the way through the wood I know not what will happen to you; but if you choose this path you must help me with my pannier, and I can tell you it's no trifle."

"Well, father," said Merrymind, "you seem tired, and I am younger than you, though not quite so tall; so, if you please, I will choose this way, and help you along with the pannier.

Scarce had he spoken when the huge man caught hold of him, firmly bound one side of

the pannier to his shoulders with the same strong rope that fastened it on his own back, and never ceased scolding and calling him names as they marched over the stony ground together. It was a rough way and a heavy burden, and Merrymind wished himself a thousand times out of the old man's company, but there was no getting off; and at length, in hopes of beguiling the way, and putting him in better humour, he began to sing an old rhyme which his mother had taught him. By this time they had entered the valley, and the night had fallen very dark and cold. The old man ceased scolding, and by a feeble glimmer of the moonlight, which now began to shine, Merrymind saw that they were close by a deserted cottage, for its doors stood open to the night winds. Here the old man paused, and loosed the rope from his own and Merrymind's shoulders.

"For seven times seven years," he said, "have I carried this pannier, "and no one ever sang while helping me before. Night releases all men, so I release you. Where will you

sleep—by my kitchen fire, or in that cold cottage?"

Merrymind thought he had got quite enough of the old man's society, and therefore answered:

"The cottage, good father, if you please."

"A sound sleep to you, then!" said the old man, and he went off with his pannier.

Merrymind stepped into the deserted cottage. The moon was shining through door and window, for the mist was gone, and the night looked clear as day; but in all the valley he could hear no sound, nor was there any trace of inhabitants in the cottage. The hearth looked as if there had not been a fire there for years. A single article of furniture was not to be seen; but Merrymind was sore weary, and, laying himself down in a corner, with his fiddle close by, he fell fast asleep.

The floor was hard, and his clothes were thin, but all through his sleep there came a sweet sound of singing voices and spinning-wheels and Merrymind thought he must have been dreaming when he opened his eyes next

morning on the bare and solitary house. The beautiful night was gone, and the heavy mist had come back. There was no blue sky, no bright sun to be seen. The light was cold and grey, like that of mid-winter; but Merrymind ate the half of his barley cake, drank from a stream hard by, and went out to see the valley.

It was full of inhabitants, and they were all busy in houses, in fields, in mills, and in forges. The men hammered and delved; the women scrubbed and scoured; the very children were hard at work; but Merrymind could hear neither talk nor laughter among them. Every face looked careworn and cheerless, and every word was something about work or gain.

Merrymind thought this unreasonable, for everybody there appeared rich. The women scrubbed in silk, the men delved in scarlet. Crimson curtains, marble floors, and shelves of silver tankards were to be seen in every house; but their owners took neither ease nor pleasure in them, and everyone laboured as it were for life.

The birds of that valley did not sing—they

were too busy pecking and building. The cats did not lie by the fire—they were all on the watch for mice. The dogs went out after hares on their own account. The cattle and sheep grazed as if they were never to get another mouthful; and the herdsmen were all splitting wood or making baskets.

In the midst of the valley there stood a stately castle, but instead of park and gardens, brew-houses and washing-greens lay round it. The gates stood open, and Merrymind ventured in. The courtyard was full of coopers. They were churning in the banquet hall. They were making cheese on the dais, and spinning and weaving in all its principal chambers. In the highest tower of that busy castle, at a window from which she could see the whole valley, there sat a noble lady. Her dress was rich, but of a dingy drab colour. Her hair was iron-grey; her look was sour and gloomy. Round her sat twelve maidens of the same aspect, spinning on ancient distaffs, and the lady spun as hard as they, but all the yarn they made was jet black.

No one in or out of the castle would reply to Merrymind's salutations, nor answer him any questions. The rich men pulled out their purses, saying, "Come and work for wages!" The poor men said, "We have no time to talk!" and a child by a cottage door said it must go to work. All day Merrymind wandered about with his broken-stringed fiddle, and all day he saw the great old man marching round and round the valley with his heavy burden of dust.

"It is the dreariest valley that ever I beheld!" he said to himself. "And no place to mend my fiddle in; but one would not like to go away without knowing what has come over the people, or if they have always worked so hard and heavily."

By this time the night again came on: he knew it by the clearing mist and the rising moon. The people began to hurry home in all directions. Silence came over house and field; and near the deserted cottage Merrymind met the old man.

"Good father," he said, "I pray you tell me

what sport or pastime have the people of this valley?"

"Sport and pastime!" cried the old man, in great wrath. "Where did you hear of the like? We work by day and sleep by night. There is no sport in Dame Dreary's land!" and, with a hearty scolding for his idleness and levity, he left Merrymind to sleep once more in the cottage.

That night the boy did not sleep so sound: though too drowsy to open his eyes, he was sure there had been singing and spinning near him all night; and, resolving to find out what this meant before he left the valley, Merrymind ate the other half of his barley cake, drank again from the stream, and went out to see the country.

The same heavy mist shut out sun and sky; the same hard work went forward wherever he turned his eyes; and the great old man with the dust-pannier strode on his accustomed round. Merrymind could find no one to answer a single question; rich and poor wanted him to work still more earnestly than the day

before; and fearing that some of them might press him into service, he wandered away to the furthest end of the valley.

There there was no work, for the land lay bare and lonely, and was bounded by grey crags, as high and steep as any castle-wall. There was no passage or outlet but through a great iron gate secured with a heavy padlock: close by it stood a white tent, and in the door a tall soldier, with one arm, stood smoking a long pipe. He was the first idle man Merrymind had seen in the valley, and his face looked to him like that of a friend; so coming up with his best bow, the boy said:

"Honourable master soldier, please to tell me what country is this, and why do the people work so hard?"

"Are you a stranger in this place, that you ask such questions?" answered the soldier.

"Yes," said Merrymind, "I came but the evening before yesterday."

"Then I am sorry for you, for here you must remain. My orders are to let everybody in and nobody out; and the giant with the dust-

pannier guards the other entrance night and day," said the soldier.

"That is bad news," said Merrymind, "but since I am here, please to tell me why were such laws made, and what is the story of this valley?"

"Hold my pipe, and I will tell you," said the soldier, "for nobody else will take the time. This valley belongs to the lady of yonder castle, whom, for seven times seven years, men have called Dame Dreary. She had another name in her youth—they called her Lady Littlecare; and then the valley was the fairest spot in all the north country. The sun shone brightest there; the summers lingered longest. Fairies danced on the hilltops; singing-birds sat on all the trees. Strongarm, the last of the giants, kept the pine-forest, and hewed yule logs out of it, when he was not sleeping in the sun. Two fair maidens, clothed in white, with silver wheels on their shoulders, came by night and spun golden threads by the hearth of every cottage. The people wore homespun, and drank out of horn; but they

had merry times. There were May-games, harvest-homes, and Christmas cheer among them. Shepherds piped on the hillsides, reapers sang in the fields, and laughter came with the red firelight out of every house in the evening. All that was changed, nobody knows how, for the old folks who remembered it are dead. Some say it was because of a magic ring which fell from the lady's finger; some, because of a spring in the castle-court which went dry. However it was, the lady turned Dame Dreary. Hard work and hard times overspread the valley. The mist came down; the fairies departed; the giant Strongarm grew old, and took up a burden of dust; and the night-spinners were seen no more in any man's dwelling. They say it will be so till Dame Dreary lays down her distaff, and dances; but all the fiddlers of the north country have tried their merriest tunes to no purpose. The king is a wise prince and a great warrior. He has filled two treasure-houses, and conquered all his enemies; but he cannot change the order of Dame Dreary's land. I

cannot tell you what great rewards he offered to one who could do it; but when no good came of his offers, the king feared that similar fashions might spread among his people, and therefore made a law that whomsoever entered should not leave it. His majesty took me captive in war, and placed me here to keep the gate, and save his subjects trouble. If I had not brought my pipe with me, I should have been working as hard as any of them by this time, with my one arm. Young master, if you take my advice you will learn to smoke."

"If my fiddle were mended it would be better," said Merrymind; and he sat talking with the soldier till the mist began to clear and the moon to rise, and then he went home to sleep in the deserted cottage.

It was late when he came near it, and the moonlight looked lovely beside the misty day. Merrymind thought it was a good time for trying to get out of the valley. There was no foot abroad, and no appearance of the giant; but as Merrymind drew near to where the two paths met, there was he fast asleep beside a

fire of pinecones, with his pannier at his head, and a heap of stones close by him. "Is that your kitchen-fire?" thought the boy to himself, and he tried to steal past; but Strongarm started up, pursued him with stones, and called him bad names halfway back to the cottage.

Merrymind was glad to run the whole way for fear of him. The door was still open, and the moon was shining in; but by the lifeless hearth there sat two fair maidens, all in white, spinning on silver wheels, and singing together a blithe and pleasant tune like the larks on May-morning. Merrymind could have listened all night, but suddenly he bethought him that these must be the night-spinners, whose threads would mend his fiddle; so, stepping with reverence and good courage, he said:

"Honourable ladies, I pray you give a poor boy a thread to mend his fiddle-strings."

"For seven times seven years," said the fair maidens, "have we spun by night in this deserted cottage, and no mortal has seen or spoken to us. Go and gather sticks through

all the valley to make a fire for us on this cold hearth, and each of us will give you a thread for your pains."

Merrymind took his broken fiddle with him, and went through all the valley gathering sticks by the moonlight; but so careful were the people of Dame Dreary's land, that scarce a stick could be found, and the moon was gone and the misty day had come before he was able to come back with a small fagot. The cottage-door was still open; the fair maidens and their silver wheels were gone; but on the floor where they sat lay two long threads of gold.

Merrymind first heaped up his fagot on the hearth, to be ready against their coming at night, and next took up the golden threads to mend his fiddle. Then he learned the truth of the little man's saying at the fair, for no sooner were the strings fastened with those golden threads than they became firm. The old dingy fiddle, too, began to shine and glisten, and at length it was golden also. This sight made Merrymind so joyful that, un-

learned as he was in music, the boy tried to play. Scarce had his bow touched the strings when they began to play of themselves the same blithe and pleasant tune which the night-spinners sang together.

"Some of the workers will stop for the sake of this tune," said Merrymind, and he went out along the valley with his fiddle. The music filled the air; the busy people heard it; and never was such a day seen in Dame Dreary's land. The men paused in their delving, the women stopped their scrubbing; the little children dropped their work; and everyone stood still in their places while Merrymind and his fiddle passed on. When he came to the castle, the coopers cast down their tools in the court; the churning and cheese-making ceased in the banquet hall; the looms and spinning-wheels stopped in the principal chambers; and Dame Dreary's distaff stood still in her hand.

Merrymind played through the halls and up the tower-stairs. As he came near, the dame cast down her distaff, and danced with all her

might. All her maidens did the like; and as they danced she grew young again—the sourness passed from her looks, and the greyness from her hair. They brought her the dress of white and cherry colour she used to wear in her youth, and she was no longer Dame Dreary, but the Lady Littlecare, with golden hair, and laughing eyes, and cheeks like summer roses.

Then a sound of merrymaking came up from the whole valley. The heavy mist rolled away from the hills; the sun shone out; the blue sky was seen; a clear spring gushed up in the castle-court; a white falcon came from the east with a golden ring, and put it on the lady's finger. After that Strongarm broke the rope, tossed the pannier of dust from his shoulder, and lay down to sleep in the sun. That night the fairies danced on the hill-tops; and the night-spinners, with their silver wheels, were seen by every hearth, and no more in the deserted cottage. Everybody praised Merrymind and his fiddle; and when news of his wonderful playing came to the

king's ears, he commanded the iron gate to be taken away; he made the captive soldier a freeman; and promoted Merrymind to be his first fiddler, which under that wise monarch was the highest post in his kingdom.

As soon as Merrymind's family and neighbours heard of the high preferment his fiddle had gained for him, they thought music must be a good thing, and man, woman, and child took to fiddling. It is said that none of them ever learned to play a single tune except Merrymind's mother, on whom her son bestowed great presents.